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Biblical History,

BY

E. EPPSTEIN,

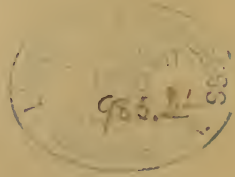
Rabbi of Bne Jeshurun Congregation,

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CHICAGO, JANUARY 14, 1873.

While in Milwaukee, my colleague Rev. Dr. EPPSTEIN submitted to me the manuscript of his "Biblical History", and I gladly testify that I read several chapters thereof, and thereby became convinced that the work is rich in information, even full in details, further that the subject is treated from a rational stand-point, and yet well adapted to nourish religious and reverential sentiments. The book cannot fail to have good results.

B. FELSENTHAL,

Rabbi "Zion Congregation", Chicago, Ill.

P R E F A C E.

A want has been long felt among teachers for a book, containing an historical narrative of the Bible, written from a rational stand-point, yet well adapted to nourish religious sentiments ; a book, that contains the facts as recorded in the Bible in such language and garb as to be palbable to the wants of the present generation.

Such a book, to my idea must be rational, but at the same time religious, so that the reader who refers to the Bible from it will not find himself confused—it should inspire the soul with that love and reverence to that holy book, which never has been wanting in Israel.

To supply this want, I have attempted at a work of this kind, and hereby transmit to the public as the result of my undertaking, this first number, the rest soon to follow.

The work is planned thus :

Period I. No. 1. From Creation to Joseph's death.

Period II. No. 2. From Moses to Moses' death.

Period III. No. 3. From Joshua to the last of the Judges.

Period IV. No. 4. From Saul to the distruction of the Sol. Temple

Period V. No. 5. From the Babilonian captivity to the destruc-
tion of the second Temple.

Period VI. No. 6. Appendix outlines of jewish history to date.

Dates are affixed to the principal events in the history according to the chronology of Dr. Zanz, who places creation 3988 before the present aera, marked B. C., at the same time the corresponding date of A. M. (after creation) is also given.

It has been my special care to adhere faithfully to the text of holy Writ, wherever it could be done with consistency, without loosing the aim I had in view in regard to the tendency of the work.

Principally this book is intended to supply the want in our Sunday Schools, but at the same time it is designated for the instruction of the public in general.

May the "Biblical History" fulfill the mission assigned it, instruct and nourish religious sentiments, and if I have succeeded in this, my object has been attained, and I find myself amply rewarded.

THE AUTHOR.

Milwaukee, Wis., January 1873.

BIBLICAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CREATION. — 3988. B. C.

The world as we see it now, with all its animate and inanimate assemblage of created beings : the heaven with the sun, moon, and stars, all had a beginning.

God alone is without beginning and without end ; he alone is not created, but is the Creator, who called every thing into existence.

The period when all these objects were brought forth is called : “The Creation” referring to that remote age, when by the will of God, and by a well devised plan, all beings and things were created.

The earth with all its existence, the heaven with all its innumerable stars, the sea with its countless fishes etc., all were created in six consecutive days, or periods.

The order in which the Lord created these things is not known to a certainty ; but light must have been the first object brought forth ; because light and the heat produced therefrom, must have had a great influence on the gradual development of the whole creation.

God can alone produce without a substance, he is omnipotent, almighty, for with him nothing is impossible.

In six days, or periods, the Lord had called into existence, all that constitutes the Universe : beginning with light and heat ; ending with the most important part of Creation — man.

At the close of the sixth day, or period, the Lord overlooked his handiwork and behold it was good ; each object from the minute particles of sand, to the master piece of God’s creation — the human being, had its proper place and specified duty to perform ; and above all each had received a certain power, to develop itself in consonance with its destiny.

So wisely was every thing created and arranged, that now, (thousands of years having passed), the same perfection of work still exists as it did in the beginning ; neither an animate nor an inanimate object has ever ceased to occupy that place, or to perform that duty, for which the Almighty had destined it.

None but an Almighty Allwise Creator could have done this ; for it required a divine wisdom to create things and beings in such shape and manner as to be best fitted forever to the great designs and purposes, for which their creation had destined them.

When at the close of the sixth day, every thing was created, the Lord rested ; the work of creation ceased. Animals inhabited the earth, birds flew in the air, fishes swam in the waters, and man was placed upon earth to rule over all of them ; he alone out of all beings created, was endowed with the faculty of reasoning ; by virtue of mind he alone was able to understand, or at least, attempt to comprehend the important place, his Creator had destined him to occupy.

The Lord in ceasing to create, had endowed every living object with a part of this creative power, so that they might aid in producing and developing their kind.

In the seventh period nothing was created by the Almighty, but he scanned his work and blessed it, in order that every thing, then and forever should keep its place, and fill the same to the benefit of the whole Universe.

The seventh day is called „Day of Rest, or Sabbath,” and in sanctifying it for the purpose of blessing the creation, the Lord wished man to imitate His divine example, viz : to work during the six days, and to rest on the seventh, in order that the works of his hands may receive the blessing of God.

CHAPTER II.

ADAM AND EVE IN PARADISE.

The first human pair were called Adam (made from dust) and Eve (mother of all living creatures).

The earth itself as it was called into existence by God, was a Paradise ; a beautiful habitation for both, man and beast. In giving to Adam and Eve control over this beautiful world, the Lord particularly

stated what he required of them, he designated their respective duties in these words: „leobdo ulshomro” to work therein, and to watch. Thus the duty of man is to work ; to exercise those faculties, with which the Lord has blessed him. Work therefore, is part of the blessing conferred upon man ; but Adam and Eve thought differently, being the only human objects on earth, they soon evinced their pre-eminence over the animals, and priding themselves upon their superior attainments, became indignant at the thought of work, and expressed themselves thus : “God alone is superior to us and he works not ; then, why should we ?”

To be like unto God was their ambition, and in their human conception of it, they ceased working, deeming an indolent life to be a godly life ; but they soon met with the just punishment of their folly.

Paradise changed its aspect ; where formerly the plot was covered with flowers, beautiful plants and shrubs ; thorns and thistles were produced ; insects devastated the fruit-bearing trees ; and poisonous snakes and reptiles endangered their paths.

Adam and Eve neglected their duty, and soon to their sorrow, became aware of their mistake, Paradise was lost to them forever, they now were obliged to work for their subsistence ; formerly work would have been a pleasure — not directly necessary for their support, but as a means of performing the required duties in the lot assigned them. Viz : replenishing and beautifying God’s creation ; as beings conscious of the benefit to be derived therefrom.

They were now compelled to work, in order to gain support, they had to eat their bread „by the sweat of their brows.”

Adam and Eve being constantly at work, experienced continually the frailty of their natures ; the inclemency of the weather was keenly felt, and they made themselves garments from the skins of animals. Their frames being shattered and healths impaired, they knew by personal experience, that they were not created to live always ; death would now have dominion over them.

Death is not the consequence of sin, but the natural result of the creation of man : no created being can be immortal, like unto the Creator, and man is no exception to that eternal maxim.

Our first human ancestors in their early life, had no conception of death ; because they did not profit by those lessons, which God and nature taught them ; but from the moment in which they felt their mortality, and became conscious that they had to return unto the earth from whence they came, death can be said to have entered the world.

CHAPTER III.

CAIN AND ABEL.

Adam and Eve having lost Paradise by their disobedience and being compelled to work for their living, took up their abode in an eastward direction from their former habitation, where two children were born unto them, whom they named Cain and Abel.

Adam, now the natural guide to his children, having benefited by the experience he had during his earlier state of existence, did not bring up his children for the purpose of leading merely an idle indolent life ; but taught them to work, and it is probable that he instructed them, that the work which he was exacting from them, was not only for their own benefit ; which, if always done, would make man a mere selfish being, but for the general good.

Cain chose to be a tiller of the ground, and Abel a herdsman. The dissimilarity, in their respective occupations, soon showed a difference in the disposition of the brothers : Cain being exposed to the open air, became rough and uncouth : Abel on the contrary always sheltered and given more to meditation, than to the exercising of his physical abilities, was consequently less rough and more forebearing.

The brothers became estranged : Cain, the wind and weather beaten husband man, who worked day after day, in order that the earth should produce the necessary supplies for himself and family ; often times was sorely perplexed upon seeing, that the inclemency of the weather rendered all his work fruitless. He therefore became envious of the prosperity and easier occupation of his brother, whom he saw, apparently idly meditating, leaving as he thought, to his faithful dog, the care of his flock, to which the cold nights or rainy days, did not in the least prevent from increasing.

Envy is a great sin, for the reason that it never exists alone, but always unites other iniquities with it ; as we shall soon see exemplified in the conduct of Cain towards Abel, which ultimately terminated in the first murder.

The envious Cain, instead of returning to his work with his usual vigor, became weary of it, he mourned and lamented his fate.

Thinking he was less favored by Deity, and confined to harder toil than his younger brother, he began to worry ; grew thin and wretched, "his face fell in."

Thus brooding over and ill satisfied with his fate, nature often reproached him, and his conscience (the voice of God in the human heart,) was often by him heard to say : “Why dost thou envy thy brother? Fulfill thine own destiny, without disturbing thy peace, by observing others. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but thou canst rule over it.”

Thus the heavenly voice spoke to him, often teaching the eternal truth, that good will bear good, sin will beget sin.

But the evil disposition grew too strong and overshadowed his better nature, he listened not to that heavenly voice; but pondered continually upon the unmerited fortune of his younger brother, and thus was envy turned into hate.

One day when he had left his work in disgust, in passing by, chanced to see his brother sitting in the shade of a tree; the very picture of peace and happiness; requested him to walk; „and when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and slew him.” Thus Abel died by the hands of his brother Cain. The cause of this fratricide was envy.

CHAPTER IV.

CAIN'S PUNISHMENT.

When the terrible deed was done and poor Abel was stretched upon the ground lifeless; then and not until that moment did Cain realize the enormity of his crime.

Death had been known heretofore, only in theory. Abel was the first human being known to die. What wonder then, that Cain, gazing upon the motionless body of his brother, soon understood, that he had taken a life, which he could never give back, and in fear and remorse, fled from the place where the horrible act was committed; but from the memory of it he could not fly, for the image of his lifeless brother was ever in his mind.

Occasionally he would rest and try to extenuate the deed; but in vain. The truth that he had committed a murder forced itself on his mind, and that the earth had swallowed the life blood of his brother:

that the life which he had taken could never be restored, but would avenge itself, he now knew.

The vision of his lifeless brother he always imagined to see. Peace and happiness fled from him and with it also rest departed, so he became “a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.”

How long he was thus wandering to and fro, is not known; but it must have been long enough to make him feel his utter wretchedness, and to learn eventually that God was his only trust and comfort, who alone could ease him of the burden, which lay upon his conscience. No sooner had he arrived at this conclusion, than he prayed to God from the depth of his soul, and said unto Him “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth.”

The great and merciful God perceiving the agony of soul and the sincere penitence of the murderer, restored unto him in a certain measure the lost peace and tranquillity, so that thereafter he lived with his family in Nod, where he was busily engaged in building a city, which he called “after the name of his son, Enoch.” Therefore, we may look upon Cain as having been the first to practice city life.

Of the further history of Cain, tradition tells us, that he was accidentally killed by Lamech, one of his descendants in the sixth generation.

Of the children of Lamech three are noteworthy: Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents and have cattle. Jubal was the father of all such as play on the harp and guitar, and Jubal-cain was an artificer in every articles of copper and iron.

At about this time another son was born unto Adam, whose name he called Seth; “For God (said she) has appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”

After the birth of Seth, Adam lived eight hundred years, and died when he was nine hundred and thirty years old, having the happiness of seeing his family waxing exceedingly great and numerous.

CHAPTER V.

THE DELUGE — 1656 A. M. & 2332 B. C.

During the tenth generation the race descended from Adam had become very numerous upon the earth, but although they had increased in numbers, they did not wax in goodly deeds; they forgot the common tie, which should have united man to man; in one, they were ungodly.

In that generation there lived Noah, a man “just and perfect in his age.” He had three sons, whose names were Shem, Ham and Japheth, and at the time referred to was five hundred years old.

Noah being both, good and wise, had by certain signs observed that the earth was to undergo a great change, and that water was destined to be an active agent in the matter, and having sufficient proof of this, he built himself an ark, that in case this change should take place, as he was certain it would, he could save himself and family.

Upwards of one hundred and twenty years, he was busily engaged in this work; and at times would urge his fellow men to lead better lives and pay some regard to the perilous change, that he told them the earth would undergo, but all to no effect; they scorned and laughed at him, and continued as wicked and violent as before.

Soon certain events proved Noah to be correct, it began to rain, and Noah with his family, “and of every living thing of all flesh two of every sort” went into the ark.

For forty days and nights the rain came down in torrents, and “all the fountains of the great deeps broke open” so that every living creature was destroyed, save those in the ark.

The Geologists of the present day, in all their researches have found indications that about the time alluded to, the greater part of the earth must have been inundated by water, and some of them assert that the continent of America was then formed.

Noah remained in the ark one hundred and eighty days and at the end of this time “the waters were abated.”

The ark finally rested on the summit of Mt. Ararat, and Noah wishing to discover the state of things around him, sent forth a dove from the ark which he had made; but it could find no resting place outside of the ark, and returned unto him; eight days after he sent forth an other dove, which returned in the evening, with the leaf of an olive tree in its bill, the week after he sent out a dove, which returned no more; thus Noah found out that the earth was dry.

After this discovery he went out of the ark, and saw the devastation of the land, with no signs of life to animate the world.

When he and his family went out and with them all the living things he had saved, he fell upon his knees and thanked God for his deliverance from a watery grave.

While in the act of praying, he looked on high and beheld a beautiful rainbow. (the first ever seen) in the cloud, which he considered as a token from God, that he would no more destroy his creatures by a flood, and that henceforth, day and night, spring, summer, autumn and winter should follow each other without interruption.

Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years, and saw with satisfaction the descendants of his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, replenish the earth.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLANTING OF THE GRAPE VINE.

Noah after leaving the ark, began to till the ground, and planted a grape vine, and not knowing the power of wine, partook too freely of it, and became intoxicated; he was found by his son Ham in such a condition, who being unaccustomed to see his father thus, made sport of him, and went out to call his brethren Shem and Japheth.

They rebuked their brother for his conduct, took a mantle and went backward into the tent, so as not to see their father in his strange condition and covered him.

When Noah awoke he knew all that had happened, and spoke with much disapprobation to Ham, but blessed his sons Shem and Japheth, Noah was nine hundred and fifty years old when he died.

Of the children of Noah it is surmised, that Shem with his numerous descendants habituated the western and central part of Asia, Japheth the eastern and southern part of Europe and Ham the northern and eastern of Africa.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TOWER OF BABEL.

The descendants of Noah were very numerous and divided themselves into various clans, all of which knew the particulars concerning the deluge, having been handed down from one generation to another and was still a subject frequently pondered upon in their minds and revolved measures, which they imagined would prevent the occurrence of such a calamity again.

As they journeyed from the east they came into a valley called Shinear, here they dwelt. They found the earth in this place well adapted to the burning of bricks, and the slime to use as mortar, and being influenced by this discovery, they said : „Come let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach up to the heaven, in order to make marvelous our name, lest we be scattered over all the earth.”

As far back as Cain, we see that cities were built. Cain built one and called it Enoch in honor of a son by that name. The custom being then prevalent, cities were built for families, clans and tribes, and named after one of their principal men. But these cities were probably only the habitations of the descendants of one family.

In the present event, the idea was to build a city on a large scale to serve the purpose, as a place of residence for many families and tribes, with a tower reaching unto the skies which same could be used to defend the inhabitants from their warlike neighbors, so that the danger of their becoming scattered or carried away, as prisoners of war could be avoided, by thus carrying their plan into execution in the manner in which they intended.

The materials, which they found in this plain, were very well adapted to serve their purposes. But as this project occupied their thoughts, they made no provision for the particular modes of expression, used in conveying their ideas, (although there was but one language and one speech in common).

As the mode of pronunciation changed into dialects among the different tribes and clans, they soon experienced great difficulty in being able to comprehend each other, before they had reached any degree of altitude in the construction of the tower, they were compelled to cease their foolish design, they therefore separated not according to the families and clans, but in accordance to the idioms spoken. They called the

city, which they had built, Babel, which signifies confusion; arising from these different idioms which formed various other languages. Those using the same mode of expression united and called themselves a nation. Therefore the building of the tower of Babel was not the source from whence arose the confusion of tongues, but the medium through which it became known that various idioms already existed, and consequently separation took place. It was therefore natural that „they were scattered over the face of the whole earth,” each nation respectfully occupying a tract of land, wherein to locate dwellings.

CHAPTER VIII.

ABRAM. — 1948 A. M. 2040 B. C.

Among the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah,* was Terah the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; the latter died early, leaving a son named Lot, who found a home in the house of his uncle Abram.

Terah lived in a country called Aram Neharaim, where there was a city called “Ur of the Chaldees” in which he resided.

We have no reliable description given to us, concerning the early life of Abram, but this much we may surmise, that he was from his earlier days of a meditative mind, an honest youth, possessed of an enlightened soul, and an excellent character.

The inhabitants of that country, who were subject to an Emperor whose name was Nimrod, were idolaters, that is they diviated from the truth as taught by Adam, Noah and Shem, Viz: that there is but one God, who created the universe, rules and governs it; that man is in duty bound to obey and worship him, that to maintain the pure principles of primitive religion, unimpaired and unadulterated is men’s destiny, that in forming human conceptions of Deity, they make idols, and worship them.

Even Terah, the father of Abram became deluded in this respect, he became a carver of idols, and instructed his son Abram in the same vocation.

Abram with his noble mind soon perceived the folly of such worship, and succeeded in influencing his father to adopt his views in this matter, but the fear of the reigning power was too great, neither Terah nor Abram wished to come in contact with the government, so they resolved

to emigrate. Abram was seventy five years old when he went with his father, brother, and Lot, his brother's son, and all his family journeyed into the land of Canaan and dwelt in the city of Haran.

Abram, who was inspired with the most sublime ideas, and whose heart was filled with love to God and purity, perceived but one way in which these truths, which influenced him as sacred convictions, should become the common property of the human race ; and that was to raise a family or tribe and educate them in those lofty principles, which should emanate perpetually from one generation to another, until all the families of the earth should be participants in the sacred idea, and then by him and his offspring the earth should be blessed.

Fully given to these thoughts, it is no wonder that Abram was moved by a divine voice within him, promising him the assistance of the Almighty, to enable him to succeed in educating them, in all the purity and truth with which his heart was imbued

CHAPTER IX.

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE.

Terah, the father of Abram died at Haran, being two hundred and five years old. Abram left his brother Nahor in the possession of the paternal inheritance, and took his wife Sarai, Lot his brother's son, and all the persons who had coincided with his religious views, his herds, bondsmen and slaves, and started across the Euphrates, in search of another land, which he might occupy and where he might realize his pious plan, of constituting an independent tribe instructed in his principles and doctrines.

Abram and his followers came to the plain of Moreh, near the city of Sichem ; this fertile tract of land being unoccupied, Abram took formal possession of it, by building an altar, in honor of the One God to the glory of whom he dedicated a new tribe. He then journeyed through the land in a southerly direction, and pitched his tent between Bethel and Hai, again he built an altar in honor of the One God, thus taking possession of the land in this name

Further travel in the land was interrupted, there being a scarcity of food. Abram was compelled to search for more cultivated land, and for that reason went to sojourn in Egypt. Here Abram accumulated

riches, consisting of herds, flocks, slaves, gold and silver, and when after a brief sojourn in Egypt, he again departed to the land, of which he had taken formal possession. He was wealthy and esteemed.

Lot, the brother's son of Abram, also was wealthy in herds and flocks, and both of these had so increased in Egypt, that the pastures became insufficient for their numerous herds, which led to frequent quarrels among the herdsmen of the two relatives.

Abram, seeing this, said to Lot : "Let there be no strife between us, neither between my and thy herdsmen, for we are near relatives, but let us separate rather than live in constant feud."

Abram, leaving Lot free choice where to settle, said : "If thou goest to the right, I shall go to the left ; if thou shouldst choose the left, I will take the right."

Lot chose the fertile plains of Jordan and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

The separation of Lot grieved the Patriarch very much, because having no children himself, he looked upon his brother's son, as his heir, unto whom he could not only leave his earthly property, but also impart those lofty and noble ideas of the One God, that he in return might transmit the same to his posterity, thus creating the tribe, which according to Abram's ideas, should become the blessing of all the families upon earth.

Apprehending the disability of transmitting his principles and doctrines to posterity, Adam grew despondent, but for a moment only, he soon evinced the truth, that such ideas as he possessed are never destined to be lost to the human race, and in the next moment he was again moved by a divine voice within him, promising him good success, in as much as he should have heirs, to whom he could transmit his ideas ; thus with new courage, he removed from thence in a southerly direction, as far as the plain of Mamre, built an altar there and took possession of it in the name of God. He was now in undisputed possession of a vast and fertile tract of land, on the west side of the river Jordan.

CHAPTER X.

ABRAM SAVES HIS KINSMAN.

The land of Sodom, where Lot had made his home, was in a state of dependence to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. The king of Sodom with

four neighboring kings refused obedience to Chedorlaomer, who assisted by three allies came to enforce the same. The five kings resisted, and in a pitched battle in the valley of Siddim, the king of Sodom, with his followers were routed; and among the captives taken in Sodom was Lot, the son of Abram's brother.

Abram upon hearing of the fate of his nephew, at once collected all the men he could, three hundred and eighteen in number, and hastened to his rescue.

At Dan he surprised the enemy by night, and achieved a signal victory, recapturing not alone Lot and his substance, but also the captives taken from the king of Sodom, and his followers with all their substance.

Abram restored everything to the rightful owners, and satisfied with having performed his duty towards his kinsman and his fellowmen, he returned to his tent.

Abram was eighty six years old, when a son was born unto him by Hagar, the handmaid of Sarai, whom he named Jshmael.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COVENANT AND ITS SIGN.

Abram having a male issue, was full of hope. The obstacle which prevented the realization of his plan seemed now to be removed.

He was the rightful owner of sufficient landed property, to secure his independence, and possessed besides ample wealth to maintain the same.

He now was obliged to devise means, by which he could contrive to keep his tribe separated from the idolatrous nations around him; in order that the principles and doctrines, which he wished to instil into their hearts, should not be shaken by the bad example set before them.

In all the important events of his life, Abram was moved by a divine voice within him, promising him assistance, support, and a glorious future: all that this divine voice promised; became true.

A son was born unto him, and hence his fondest hopes were realized; he had now one other important duty to perform, Viz: that, what he

had gained towards the acknowledgment of the One God by his tribe, should no more be lost. For upwards of thirteen years this thought was uppermost in his mind, he had well weighed its necessity, as also its difficulty.

In his ninety ninth year, Abram was again moved by a divine voice within him, directing him to effect a covenant between himself and his respective offsprings and the One God, whom he acknowledged, and whose doctrines he had taught all his life-time, by virtue of which, they should have a lawful claim to the land, of which he had taken possession, and furthermore, that his posterity should establish a nation, which would worship the Almighty God; and as a sign of this covenant, the divine voice further directed him to introduce circumcision among his tribe.

Abram was ninety nine and Jshmael thirteen years old, when the rite of circumcision was introduced: at the same time a law was made that whosoever should neglect this custom, should be expelled from the tribe.

Abram considering himself to have entered into a new covenant with God, by instituting circumcision, an external sign, which separated him from the surrounding nations, fully believing, that he would be the father of a powerful nation; changed his name Abram, into Abraham, by which he meant to convey the idea “Av Hamon gojim, “father of a multitude of nations.”

Abraham still entertained the hope of receiving an heir from his legitimate wife Sarai, so he also changed her name into Sarah.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

There came unto Abraham at about this time three strangers, whom he entertained with genuine hospitality: as the time of their departure drew nigh, one of them predicted, that Abraham would have a legitimate heir from his wife Sarah.

Abraham conducted his guests on their way, and finding that they were bound for Sodom, inquired of them concerning the city and its inhabitants, taking an interest in it on account of Lot's being situated there and was very much surprised when he was told, that its inhabitants were

very wicked, and that the city was doomed to destruction. After he had left the guests to proceed on their way, his thoughts found utterance in a deep and earnest prayer, for the wicked and sinful people.

Lot was sitting under the gate-way of the city of Sodom, when two of the strangers, who had visited his kinsman, appeared on the road. He accosted and invited them to come to his house, to which they assented.

Towards evening, the news that two strangers had arrived in the city spread from house to house; it aroused the wicked people to such a state of excitement, that they surrounded Lot's house, and demanded of him the delivery of the strangers, whom they wished to abuse; but Lot refused, and when they forcibly wished to enter his house, the strangers assisted him in his defense and succeeded in barring the entrance.

In the dead of night, Lot was told, that the city was doomed to destruction, that to save himself and family, they should before the dawn of day, fly to the neighboring mountains. Lot and his two daughters reached the mountain in safety, but his wife perished on the way.

When Abraham on the coming morn, arrived at the place, where he had offered up his prayers to God for the sinful people, he saw the smoke ascending from a dead sea, which was the memorial of the once flourishing, but sinful cities.

CHARTER XIII.

ISAAC, HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham journeyed towards the South, and dwelt in Gerar, the land of Philistia; here Sarah, the wife of Abraham, gave birth to the long expected legitimate heir, when Abraham was one hundred, and his wife was ninety years old. They named him Isaac (Jitzchok he will laugh.)

Sarah disliked the idea of her son Isaac, sharing his father's inheritance with his half brother Ishmael, the son of her hand maiden Hagar, and prevailed on Abraham to send both away.

After providing for Hagar and her son, he permitted them to go. They went into the wilderness of Peran, where Ishmael in the course of time, became a great warrior; an archer of renown.

The inhabitants of Philistia, although they did not venture on open hostility against Abraham, injured him whenever a chance for so doing presented itself, when Abraham dug a well upon an unoccupied tract of land, the inhabitants destroyed it.

Abimelech, the king, being informed of the troubles existing between Abraham and his subjects, went to him, and made an alliance with him, bestowing at the same time many presents upon the Patriarch and confirming his claim on the land which he occupied.

Abraham called the place where the alliance was entered into, Beer-sheba, the well of swearing ; he planted a grove therein, and claimed the land in the name of the Almighty.

CHAPTER XIV.

ABRAHAM'S LOVE TO GOD.

Sacrificing unto the gods was a practice known among the most antique nations. In Philistia even was the horrible custom of man-sacrifice practised. People wished to show their love to the gods by the acts of sacrifices. Abraham sojourning in Philistia a long time, witnessed repeatedly this practice and finally ; he conceived the idea, that to demonstrate his inexpressible love to God, he should sacrifice his own, dear son. The divine voice had also commended him to do so.

Abraham at once took his son Isaac, two of his trust-worthy servants, the requisite implements and travelling three days, they came in full view of the Mt. Moriah, where the sacrifice should take place. Arriving at the foot of the Mount, he ordered the servants to remain, where they were. He and his son then dismounted, and ascended the Mount on foot. Isaac said to his father : Here is fire and wood, but where is the lamb for an offering ; He was answered : God himself will provide a lamb my son ; whereupon they proceeded.

Arrived at the top of the Mount, Abraham at once proceeded to erect an altar, laid the wood thereon, then bound his son, and placed him on the altar upon the wood, ready for a deed, which in his opinion would prove his unbounded love towards God. But the principles and doctrines, with which Abraham was inspired, were not destined indeed to be demonstrated by such a terrible deed. When in the act of sacrificing, a divine inspiration checked him, assuring him, that the resolute

will to sacrifice his own son, was a convincing proof of his inexpressible love to his God.

When Abram had sacrificed a ram instead of his son Isaac, the same voice, that checked his design of offering his son, assured him that the Lord would bless him, by multiplying his seed, that they should become as numerous as the sand of the earth, and the stars of heaven, that they should become the blessing of all the nations of the earth and would inherit the gates of their enemies.

Abraham and Isaac on leaving the Mount met their servants and joyously wended their way homeward.

The Patriarch, in order to withdraw his followers from the superstitions of the Phelistines, now removed from thence to his former home in the vicinity of Hebron.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF SARAH.

Arrived near Hebron, in a place called Kiriath-Arba, Sarah, the faithful wife of Abraham died, being one hundred twenty and seven years old. Abraham wished to have a place of his own, his claims to which should be undisputable, where he could inter the remains of his wife Sarah, and where he himself could repose when death. His possessions in that vicinity being in a valley, he failed to find suitable grounds there, but being aware of a cave near Hebron, he went to the owner Ephroth, the Hittite, bought it and the tract of land surrounding (Machpelah before Mamrah) for four hundred shekels of silver. This transaction took place in the presence of witnesses.

Abraham, now in the possession of a proper place for sepulchral purposes, designated the same as the burial place for himself and family. In this cave Abraham buried Sarah.

The next great care of the Patriarch was to prevent the amalgamation of his son Isaac with the daughters of the land, because he wished to have his tribe entirely separated from them. He therefore called the Steward of his house Eliczer of Damaskus, a trustworthy servant, and commissioned him under oath, to proceed at once to his family in Aram Noharaim, or Padan Aram, and to bring a wife, for his son Isaac from the tribe of Terah.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUCCESS OF ELIEZER'S MISSION.

As Eliezer had promised to his master, he took at once ten camels, a train of followers, all servants of Abraham, and wended his way towards Nahor, where he knew, that the brother of Abraham remained after his master had left his family.

Arrived in sight of the city, Eliezer and his men encamped round a well, where the daughters of the inhabitants of the city, came to take their supply of water. Here he made the camels lie down and he offered the following prayer to the God of his master. "O Lord, God of my master Abraham ; behold I stand here by the well of water and the daughters of the men of the city come to draw water, and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say : let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, drink and I will give thy camels drink also : let the same be she, that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac, and thereby shall I know that thou hast shown kindness unto my master.

Even before Eliezer had finished his prayer, the maidens of the city came out to draw water, among them was Rebekkah, daughter of Bethuel, a son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, the brother of Abraham.

Eliezer, not knowing these facts, approached Rebekkah after she had drawn water from the well, and requested her to let him drink. She very kindly took down her pitcher handed it to him saying : Drink my Lord and if finished, I will also draw water for thy camels. She then emptied the pitcher into the trough, ran again unto the well, and drew water for all the camels ; finished with this work, Eliezer, who all this while stood agreeably surprised, presented Rebekkah with a golden ring and bracelets, asked her about her family, and whether there was room for him, his men and camels to lodge over night in her father's house : when she replied that she was the daughter of Bethuel, a grand-child of Nahor, and there was plenty of room and raiment for himself, men and camels in the house. Then Eliezer bowed down and offered thanks to the Lord saying : "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham who had not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth, I being in the way the Lord led me to the house of my master's brother."

The damsel, meanwhile ran home to her mother, and there related, all that had happened to her at the well. Laban, the brother of Rebekkah, seeing the presents his sister had received, and hearing her

statement, went out to Eliezer and urged him to come into the house, where he had everything prepared to receive and entertain him.

The Steward, on coming into the house, rejoiced that he had safely arrived at the place to which his master had sent him, to bring a wife to Isaac, refused to be entertained, before he had delivered his message. Requested to proceed, he gave an account of his masters repute, that he was a mighty chief, very rich in herds, flocks, camels and slaves, that he had but one legitimate heir, his son Isaac, whom he did not wish to see amalgamated with one of the daughters of the nation, within which he resided, and that for this reason he had sworn to his master, to proceed to Abraham's relatives, and from these bring a wife for Isaac.

He then related his proceedings by the well, his prayer and the fulfillment thereof, at the appearance of Rebekkah, concluding with these words: "And I bowed down my head and worshipped the Lord and blessed the Lord, God of my master Abraham, who has led me in the right way to take my masters brother's daughter unto his son. And now, if you will deal kindly with my master, tell me, and if not tell me also, that I may turn to the right or to the left.

Hereupon both, Laban and Bethuel, answered: "God wills it so, here is Rebekkah, take her and she shall be the wife of the son of thy master. Eliezer thanked the Lord, and begged leave to proceed homeward, as early as possible, so as to bring the joyful tidings to his master. The next morning the Steward took Rebekkah, the future wife of his master's son, and after she had received the blessing of her parents, returned to Abraham, where the marriage between Isaac and Rebekkah was consummated.

CHAPTER XVII.

ABRAHAM'S DEATH — 2123 A. M. 1865 B. C.

The fondest hopes of Abraham were now realized; he had a host of friends and followers who co-incided with him in his religious views, and above all, he had a legitimate heir to whom he not alone would leave his riches, but of whom he was assured would remain true and faithful to the lofty and noble principles, which he taught all his lifetime; the tribe of which he was the progenitor, was well launched in the world, the idea of a unity of God as developed and taught by him, had now fairly taken root among the friends and followers, and concen-

trated in Isaac, as the leader and chief of a community ; separated from the superstitious and idolatrous people surrounding them, by a fixed religious idea, and by an external sign of the covenant made between God and himself, and also through God's help he was in the full and undisputed possession of a large and fertile tract of land ; he had fully realized his plans, and his fondest hopes were fulfilled.

When Abraham was one hundred seventy and five years old, he bequeathed all he had, real estate and personal property, to his son Isaac, admonishing him to remain in his own land, to practice love to God, and teach the truth, and then died in peace, well contented with the result he had achieved. Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, at the side of his lamented wife Sarah.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ISAAC AND HIS FAMILY.

Isaac was not endowed with that energy, that made Abraham, his father, a mighty man, beloved and respected by his neighbors. Record says of Isaac : he walked in the ways of his father, by which history wished to convey the idea that he was constantly guided by the principles and doctrines of his father Abraham. According to the tradition we have of him, he came very little in contact with the sheiks or princes of the surrounding nations.

Isaac was sixty years old when twins were born him by his wife Rebecca, whom he named "Esau and Jacob." When the boys grew up, Esau became a hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob being of a meditative mind, was much given to remain at home ; thus being under the benign home-influences, he was in his youth taught and instilled with the doctrines and principles of his sire Abraham—(the latter probably, who lived yet fifteen years after Jacob was born, gave him the first instructions therein)—and these were to him more valuable than all the possession of his parent. Soon the difference in the character of the two youths manifested itself to all those that took an interest in them.

According to a custom then prevalent, the first born male child was the legal heir to his father's possessions—the other children received but presents. In Isaac's family was that heir also the representative of that covenant as concluded between God and Abraham, he must be

thoroughly instilled with those lofty and noble ideas of a One God, that constituted the medium of becoming a blessing to all the families of the earth.

How little Esau did know or care about these rights and privileges, is manifest in one transaction which he agreed upon with his brother Jacob. Coming home one day from hunting, weary and hungry, he sold all his rights and privileges as the legal heir, or first born, to his brother for a mess of pottage.

This action on Esau's part showed conclusively that he had not the proper spirit to undertake the responsibility of carrying out the great hopes of Abraham, that by his tribe the truths of a One God should be taught and spread all over the earth.

Of the stated transaction probably only Rebecca had knowledge, and therefor she preferred Jacob to Esau, whereas Isaac, looking upon Esau as his legitimate heir and representative, rather preferred Esau. A famine occurring in the land, and Isaac having been admonished by his father not to go abroad, he only went into Philistia, to his father's ally Abimelech and moved to Geror, the place which Abraham had taken possession of, and where he dug a well. But the inhabitants ignored Isaac's claims upon the land, they injured him whenever they could, in as much as they destroyed the wells which Isaac had re-dug, after they had been already filled up by them with earth, after the death of Abraham.

Abimelech hearing of these molestations, came to Isaac, renewed the covenant of friendship, as concluded with Abraham, and rebuked his subjects for being thus averse to his ally. In memory to this event Isaac built an altar to the Lord, and called the place Bear Sheba.

Here Esau again proved his inability of becoming the true representative of such noble ideas as promulgated by Abraham; he united with the daughters of the land, by taking as his wife, Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, much to the grieve of Isaac and Rebecca.

CHAPTER XIX.

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB.

When Isaac grew old his eyes became dim and he could not see, so, reflecting that his end may be nigh, he called his elder son Esau, whom he still considered as his legal heir, and told him to go to his favorite

hunt and prepare some venison, that he may eat thereof and bless him before his death; hereupon Esau departed

Rebecca having heard all that had transpired between Isaac and Esau, and being fully convinced that her elder son had not the capacity of becoming the faithful vehicle by which Abraham's ideas could be immortalized, and being on the other side, aware that her younger son Jacob possessed all these faculties, which were necessary to consummate all these ideas, and knowing furthermore that Esau, at a former occasion, had sold his rights to his brother, she thought herself fully justified in substituting Jacob instead of Esau to receive the paternal blessing.

Acting upon this conviction she persuaded Jacob to bring unto his father venison which she had prepared, and to receive the blessing which he had intended for Esau. Jacob reluctantly obeyed his mother, and took all the precautions, suggested by her went in to his father, presented the meal and in return received the blessing of Isaac, which had been destined to Esau, his older brother.

When Esau returned from the field he went in to his father, demanding the blessing which was promised him. His dismay and anger was great, when he heard that Jacob had superceeded him in bringing the venison and receiving the blessing. Then Esau, in accusing his brother of deception, unawares became instrumental in letting his father know, that he had sold his birth-right to his younger brother, which naturally made Jacob the rightful claimant of the blessing, whereupon Isaac exclaimed : "He is blessed and blessed shall he remain !"

Esau thwarted in his design was overheard by Rebecca, his mother, saying : "When the days of mourning for my father shall come, than will I slay my brother Jacob." Rebecca now took counsel with Isaac in the matter, and the latter called Jacob into his presence. Here he voluntarily renewed the blessing conferred upon him, adding, that the Lord Almighty may bless and multiply him, that he may become a multitude of nations, who may inherit the land which God gave to Abraham. Jacob was then commanded to go to his uncle Laban to reside there until his brother's anger should have subsided and from thence he should also take unto himself a wife.

CHAPTER XX.

JACOB'S DREAM—HIS ARRIVAL.

Jacob obeyed his father and mother, departed from Bear Sheba and went towards Haran the abode of Laban, the brother of his mother. Jacob never being from home, now cast off as a fugitive, searching for a place of safety from the anger of his brother, on wending his way over the mountainous regions of Canaan to reach Haran, was seriously reflecting whether the blessing he received from his father “and the Lord may bestow upon thee the blessing of Abraham,” was sufficient to repay him for all the trials and hardships he was to undergo; this thought, and the fear that his brother Esau might overtake him, were blended in his mind, when already home-sick he had reached the top of a mountain and seeing the sun set, he was compelled to encamp in the open field.

His mind was exceedingly agitated, when he laid down upon a hard stone, to close his eyes in sleep. Never used to out-door camping, Jacob, now exposed to the inclemency of the weather, without the least protection against the wild animals, and fearing every minute to hear the footsteps of his angry brother, had occasion to offer a fervent prayer to the God of his fathers, and with the words of this prayer in his mind he slept.

When he awoke in the morning he remembered a beautiful dream he had, and it revived his weakened courage, and re-awakened his dispondent spirit. In the dream (which he took as a sign, that God had answered his prayer), he saw a ladder standing upon the earth, whose top reached up to heaven; angels were ascending and descending thereupon, and high above him in heaven he heard the voice of the God of Abraham, saying: “Fear not! I am the God of Abraham and of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest I will give thee, and thy offsprings. Thou shalt spread abroad to the west, east, north and south, and with thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold! I am with thee, I will guard thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; I will not leave thee, until I have done, what I promised thee.” This dream and these words were vivid in his mind, and he looked around in awe and fear, exclaiming, “Truly; here is a house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

According to an old custom he erected a stone in that place, anointed it, by pouring oil upon it, and made a vow, saying: “When God will be with me where I go, give me bread to eat and raiment to put on; if

I again come back to the house of my father, then shall this stone be a house of God, (a place of worship,) and of all that the Lord giveth me, I will give away the tenth part."

With renewed vigor he now turned to the east and went onward. Towards evening he came in sight of a well, where he found some herdsmen. Being not yet time to bring the flocks home, he accosted the shepards asking, why they were assembled around that well at so early an hour, when they told him, that they had to await the arrival of other herdsmen, in order to unite their strength so as to remove the stone from the mouth of the well. On further inquiring where they were from, he was told the pleasant news, that they came from Haran, that they knew Laban, and that he was well. Just then the herdsmen directed his attention to the approaching Rachel, the daughter of Laban, who came to the well with the flocks of her father.

When Jacob saw Rachel, his cousin, a fair damsel, he wept for joy, rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, assisted in filling the trough for the sheep, and meanwhile told her that he was the son of Rebekkah, the sister of her father; after which they embraced and kissed each other. Rachel hurried home and told her father, that she had met her cousin by the well. Laban at once went out to meet the son of his sister, and on being told by Jacob, the circumstances that brought him there, he invited him to his house. Thus Jacob reached his destination in safety, and was housed and cared for by the brother of his mother.

CHAPTER XXI.

LABAN'S DECEPTION.

Jacob had told unto Laban all that had happened unto him, thus indicating that he came not to pay his kinsman a visit, but to remain until his brother Esau was appeased. When Jacob was with Laban about a month, and meanwhile had made himself useful as a herdsman, Laban said, "Though thou art my kinsman, I will not take thy services for nothing, ask for a reward.

Now Laban had two daughters; Rachel, the younger one, whom Jacob had met at the well, was a fair and beautiful damsel, while Leah, the older, was less beautiful, suffering from inflamed eyes.

When Jacob was to ask a reward for his services, he reflected on the admonition of his father, Isaac, to take himself a wife from Terah's

tribe, and answered unto Laban, saying: "I will serve thee seven years as a faithful herdsman for Rachel, thy younger daughter. To this Laban readily consented.

The seven years passed quickly in the estimation of Jacob, on account of the love he bore to his intended; how much must have been his dismay, when, after the nuptial ceremony was over, he found, that Laban had placed Leah at his side instead of Rachel, thus grossly deceiving him. Being rebuked for doing so, Laban excused himself by saying: It is not customary with us, to give the younger daughter away in wed-lock, before the older one, but, said he: If you agree to serve me again seven years, I also will give you Rachel.

The law at that time and of that land did not prevent a man from having more than one wife, so Jacob willingly gave his word to serve seven years more. When the nuptial-feast for Leah, which lasted seven days was over, Laban gave also Rachel in wed-lock unto Jacob. Unto Leah Laban gave Zilpah and unto Rachel Bilhah as handmaidens.

The fourteen years passed; Jacob had probably no news at all from home, or only such as would discourage him, so that he could not yet think of returning to his father's house. Being thus situated, he made a contract with Laban, whereby he should receive a certain amount of sheep and goats, as a reward for his services.

During the remaining six years of Jacob's stay with Laban, he was deceived by his kinsman often times and had born it in silence. Meanwhile his family increased, he had now eleven sons and one daughter: Reuben, Simon, Levi, Jehudah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Joseph and Dinah. Of these but Joseph was born him by Rachel.

When Joseph, his youngest son, was born, Jacob received a message, Rebecca having sent her nurse Deborah to let him know that he now could venture to return home and longing to once more see his old parents, not wishing to lose a moments time in going home, taking no pleasure in serving a man, who had deceived him so often and who even now was looking upon him with jealousy, because he had accumulated some riches, he, without asking his kinsman's permission, who had started on a journey to witness the shearing of sheep, took his wives, his children and the flocks, belonging to him, and started on his homeward journey.

When Laban came home from shearing, where he had been for some time he heard of the departure of Jacob, and immediately after being informed of it, started in pursuit of him, and after three days journeying Laban overtook Jacob.

The kinsmen met, high words past between them. Jacob saying, that he went without Laban's permit, because he was afraid that he would, after having deceived him so often, take from him by force his wives and children. Finally they adjusted matters to the satisfaction of both. By mutual agreement a heap of stones was collected a pillar erected, called Galed, which was intended as a demarcation, which neither should pass for the sake of harming the other.

CHAPTER XXII.

JACOB'S RECONCILIATION WITH HIS BROTHER.

After twenty years servitude Jacob had re-gained his independence, he was blessed with a family of twelve children, had gained numerous flocks of sheep, camels, goats etc., and had men enough to take care of them. He had left the protection of Laban and meditating upon his own weakness, the fear of his brother Esau powerfully returned to his mind. He naturally thought, that Esau had become a powerful man, while he had remained a simple shepherd, and if Esau intended to take vengeance on him for the wrongs committed, what could he do to prevent it?

To make sure of Esau's design, he sent messengers before him to meet his brother and commanded them saying : Thus shall you speak unto my Lord Esau : Thy servant Jacob saith thus : I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there till now, And I have oxen, mules and flocks, man and maid—servants and I have sent to tell my Lord, that I might find grace in thy sight. But the messengers returned with the news, that Esau was coming to meet him accompanied by four hundred men.

Jacob was very much afraid, that his brother was coming to slay him and make a rich spoil. To counteract this design, he divided all his flocks and herds into two bands, saying : "If Esau comes to slay the one, the other might find time to escape." At the same time he selected presents to be delivered unto his brother by special messengers, whom he sent ahead with the instruction given to each separately, that by meeting Esau, they should not forget to mention that "these are presents to my Lord Esau from his servant Jacob."

During that night Jacob transported his family and all he had over the brook Jabbok, he alone remained on the other side. Here he was

attacked by an unknown man, with whom he wrestled a long time, until finally the stranger, unable to conquer his antagonist, and not wishing to remain with him after daybreak, dislocated Jacob's hip-bone, and thus having lamed him, left.

Jacob had left Penuel with his family, when he saw Esau with his men approaching. Being anxious about the safety of his family, and not knowing how this scene was to end, Jacob humbled himself and bowed down submissively before his brother, but contrary to all his expectations, Esau welcomed him in the most friendly manner. When requested by Jacob to accept the presents as offered, Esau answered, I have enough, brother; and he only took it after being pressed so to do.

The brothers were now reconciled. Esau offered Jacob part of Seir, his possession, if he wished to go with him, but was thankfully refused; Jacob was then offered the use of all, or part of Esau's men, as guardsmen, but he declined in like manner.

Here the brothers must have come to a perfect and mutual understanding and agreement, regarding their future possessions, and their friendly relations to each other; Esau took the land of Edom as his part, leaving unto Jacob the full and undisputed title to the possessions of his father Isaac.

After this friendly intercourse Esau went on to his home and Jacob stopped at a place called "Succoth," where he built himself a house and booths for his cattle. The building of the house for himself, and the booths for the cattle, justifies our belief, that Jacob remained in Succoth a considerable time.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ISRAEL.

After Jacob remained at Succoth some time he crossed the river Jordan, in order to go to Shechem, and to settle on the possessions of his father. Finding the Emorite occupying it, and not prepared to re-take the land belonging to him by inheritance, he bought the piece, where he pitched his tent, for one hundred shekels of silver.

Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, contrary to the prevailing custom, went out to see, as she said, the daughters of the land. On her way she was seen by Shechem, son of Hamor, the prince of the country, who waylaid and carried her off into his house.

Finding that she was the daughter of a powerful man, who claimed the tract of land which he occupied, the same being an inheritance from his ancestors, Shechem persuaded his father Hamor, to go to Jacob and ask Dinah for him as a wife. Negotiations were entered upon between Hamor and Jacob. Hamor, in urging his behest, intimated that by this union the two tribes would be blended into one. The brothers of Dinah being in the delf by the herds, Jacob deferred the answer until their return.

The brothers of Dinah being called in to council refused to enter into relationship with a pagan. Dinah being still in the hands of Shechem, who refused to release her, the brothers contrived plans by which they could overpower Shechem, with his followers, and release their sister. Simon and Levi are mentioned as the instigators and executors of this plan, which was successful—they killed Hamor and his son Shechem and released their sister, taking her home.

Jacob, now deeming his position perilous, on account of the deed committed by his sons on the powerful prince of the land, thought it prudent to remove from thence. He now remembered the place where he dreamt the beautiful dream, when he left his home, and being in the same predicament again he resolved to move thither. He ordered all his household to put away the strange gods, idols, that were with them, to cleanse themselves ere they were to put up their abode at Beth-El, where, on the occasion referred to above, he had put up a stone as a monument. Arrived here, he put up an altar and worshipped the Lord.

Deborah, the nurse of his mother, who was the messenger sent to call him home, died at Beth-El, and was buried under an oak tree, the place was called "Allon Bachuth."

Here Jacob had ample opportunity to reflect upon his fate. In this place he had rested a poor, pursued wanderer, when a dream gave him consolation and hope. Now part of this dream was fulfilled. He had gained riches beyond his expectations; his family was large, and with his brother he was reconciled, so he need to entertain no fears; he could go home unmolested to take possession of the property of his father, which Esau had voluntarily given up. But again he was unhappy. His sons Simon and Levi had aroused all the neighboring princes against him, and every moment he was expecting to hear of the approach of their armies.

Being thus sorely afflicted he thought of the great plans of an uni-

versal blessing to be issued from his family, which plans now seemed to be fatally interrupted. But like unto Abraham he could only be discouraged for a moment. In the next instant, on the place hallowed by and to him, he perceived a divine voice insuring him success, in as-much as nations should come from him and they should have full possession of the inheritance of Abraham.

The bright and pious example of Abraham now so vividly brought to his mind, he resolved by all means to imitate the same. Henceforth he should no more be dependent on another, but independent of all outside influences, he would carry out that plan of his grand-sire, that his offsprings should become the blessing of nations, by the promulgation of that lofty idea, and the pure and unbiassed principles and doctrines of the Patriarch.

Hitherto he was called Jacob, (holding heels, subject to another,) now, by virtue of the resolution recently resolved, he will be called Israel, (one that rules with God).

Jacob now moved from Beth-El towards his father's home ; when near Ephroth, Rachel, his beloved wife, bore him another son, under great pains, and when dying she called the child " Benoni," son of my misery, but Jacob named him Benjamin, son of my right. Rachel died and was buried there by the road-side, and a stone put up to immortalize the place where Rachel's earthly remains were interred.

Arrived at home a tried and experienced man, Jacob thought on passing the rest of his life peacefully upon the possessions of his father, but was deceived in his design, as we will see hereafter.

Isaac having reached the age of one hundred and eighty years, died and was buried by his sons Jacob and Esau, in the cave of Machpelah, at the side of his father Abraham and his mother Sarah, 2228 A. M. 1760 B. C.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOSEPH.

Jacob (Israel) now dwelt in the land of his fathers, his sons tended his flocks, even Joseph, the eldest son of his beloved wife Rachel, being then only seventeen years old, was thus occupied. As Jacob was now about one hundred years old, it became necessary for him to chose one of his sons to be his heir.

To raise Reuben, the eldest, to said dignity, was out of the question, since Jacob had long lost confidence in him. Simon and Levi, the next two, showed by their violence committed on Shechem, that they were not the proper persons to assume such a responsibility. Jehudah, the fourth son, was silently considered to be the presumptive heir.

At about that time Jacob showed partiality for his son Joseph, he made for him a coat of many colors. The brothers on perceiving this thought that their younger brother wanted to be the heir, and for that reason they began to look upon him with envy and jealousy. Such were the troubles in Jacob's family, when Joseph, after a short interval, related to his brethren two dreams that he had dreamt.

In the first he saw himself and brothers binding sheaves in the field, when his sheaf stood erect in the middle, and those of the others were bowing down before his. In the second, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing to him. Although his father, on hearing them rebuked him for his foolish dreams; but nevertheless the suspicion of his brothers increased and produced a violent hatred against him.

So matters stood when the brethren once let their flocks into the possession of Shechem, which they considered their own by inheritance and conquest. Jacob still fearing the wrath of the neighboring tribes, and afraid they would attack his sons, sent Joseph to Shechem and charged him to bring back word of their well being. Joseph, after wandering about for some time in the then unoccupied land in search of his brethren, was told by a man whom he met that they were at Dathan, whither he then went.

When his brethren saw him at a distance, they said to one another, "Behold, here comes the dreamer; let us kill him and then see how his dreams will be verified. But Reuben, with a view to save him, said: "Let us not kill him directly, but throw him into one of these pits and leave him there." To this the brethren agreed.

Joseph on coming was seized, his coat of many colors taken from him, and he himself was thrown into the pit. The brethren then took Joseph's coat, tore it, dipped it in the blood of some killed animal and sent it home to their father, with the message, "This coat we have found."

Jacob at once recognized the garment of his son, rent his clothes, in token of despair, and lamented the loss of his ill-fated child, saying: "There is no doubt but a wild beast has killed him." He gave vent to the most violent grief, and none could console him.

After Reuben had left his brethren on some errand, they sat down to their meal, when a caravan of Ishmaelites and Midianites came up to them. Jehudah, knowing that he had some influence with his brethren, and seeing that the first and most violent rage had subsided, proposed to sell Joseph to the merchant-men as a slave, stating that by so doing they had obtained their object, without laying hand upon their brother. To this proposition they all assented; Joseph was taken from the pit and sold to the passing merchants for twenty pieces of silver, who took him and went off.

Reuben returned and was overcome with sorrow, on not finding Joseph, but he was too late and had to bear it in silence.

CHAPTER XXV.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

The merchants brought Joseph to Egypt, and there disposed of him, by selling him to Potiphar an officer of the king. Here Joseph made himself so useful, was so honest, that his master soon appreciated his services and made him steward, giving him unlimited control in his house and fields.

Although Joseph had secured for himself the confidence of his master, he failed to gain the same by the wife of Potiphar. She hated him and falsely accused Joseph of a crime, which he had no idea of committing. Potiphar, without investigating the matter, on this accusation, placed the innocent Joseph into prison.

At the same time the chief butler and chief baker of the king had committed a transgression against their lord and were placed in custody to await investigation.

Joseph meanwhile had found grace in the eyes of the jailor and he made him overseer over the other prisoners. In this capacity he had also charge over the butler and baker of the king's household.

One morning, on coming into the place of their confinement, he found them very much depressed in spirits, and upon inquiry found it, to be the result of certain dreams, which both had dreamt in one and the same night, of which they did not know the meaning. Joseph asked them to relate their dreams, so, if possible, to interpret them.

The chief butler then said: In my dream I saw a grape vine with

three branches bud and blossom, and as the cup of Pharaoh was in my hand, I pressed the ripe grapes therein and presented the wine unto Pharaoh, who took it out of my hand. Hereupon Joseph predicted, that after three days the king would restore him again to his former office, and he added : If such will become true, remember me unto the king, for I am innocently imprisoned.

The chief baker than stated, that in his dream he saw three baskets upon his head, in the uppermost were all kind of confectionaries for the king's table, but the fowls of heaven came to eat it up. Joseph's interpretation was, that after three days the baker will be found guilty, and executed by order of the king.

The third day happened to be the birth-day of Pharaoh. Being surrounded by his officers who presented their well wishes, the king remembered his butler and baker who were confined, and ordered an investigation. The result of this was that the butler was found innocent, but the guilt of the baker was proven. Hereupon the king ordered to re-instate the butler into his office, but the baker was, by the same decree, executed.

Thus the interpretations of Joseph became true. The chief butler though, was ungrateful enough to forget the entreaties of Joseph, he did not mention him to Pharaoh.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PHARAOH'S DREAM.

Some two years after the butler and baker were taken from prison, the one to be elevated to his former position, the latter to be executed, Pharaoh, the king, had two dreams, one closely connected with the other. Pharaoh arose in the morning very much troubled. He assembled all his wise men, relating to them the dreams, but they failed to give him a satisfactory interpretation of the same.

The chief butler, on seeing the king displeased with the answer of the wise men of Egypt, now remembered Joseph to Pharaoh saying : that this Hebrew lad had interpreted his and his fellow-prisoners dream truthfully. Hearing this, the king ordered the release of Joseph from prison and to be brought to court.

Joseph was introduced to the king, who told him of his troubled mind about some dreams, which he dreamt, and having heard, that he

could interpret them, wished him to give his interpretation. Joseph, bowing respectfully, answered : that God alone is able to give the requested explanation to the king, but should be highly delighted to hear the dreams and with the grace of God would try his best to please the king.

Pharaoh related his dreams. He dreamed he saw seven fat cows rising from the Nile and grazing in the meadow by the river's side. Following these he beheld seven poor cows rising who swallowed the seven fat ones, and contrary to all natural result, they remained poor and meagre as before. In the second dream he saw seven ears of corn coming up from one stalk, rank and good, and seven empty and hollow ears from one stalk. And like unto the first dream the seven empty and hollow ears swallowed the seven full ones, and still remained as empty and hollow as before.

Joseph interpreted the dream, saying that God wished to forewarn Pharaoh of what was about to come. The two dreams are one, and are to show that the time is nigh the fulfillment of the dreams. The seven fat cows and the seven full ears denote seven years of plentitude, and the seven poor cows and seven hollow ears seven years of sterility. The famine caused by it will be so severe that the seven years of plentitude will be wholly forgotten. Joseph then humbly advised Pharaoh to appoint officers who shall buy up and store plenty of provision during the seven years of plenteousness, in order to support the country in the seven following years of sterility and extreme famine.

Pharaoh was so pleased with the wisdom and meekness of Joseph, that he put a ring upon his finger and a chain around his neck, placed a kingly chariot at his disposal and elevated him to the position of Vice-King over Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he was thus elevated. The king called him Zophnath Paaneach, (revealer of secrets,) and gave him Osnath, the daughter of the priest of On, for a wife.

Soon the prediction of Joseph was verified. Never did nature produce such a plentitude of crops as it did in the seven ensuing years. Joseph being fully authorized, bought corn and provender, and stored it up in cities built for that very purpose.

These seven years passed, a sterility set in, the like had not been experienced in that part of the country. Joseph, in the name of Pharaoh, now opened his store-houses and sold corn to the famine-stricken subjects of Egypt,

During these years Osnath bore unto Joseph two sons, whom he called Manasseh “the Lord made me forget all my toil and my father’s house,” and Ephraim, “the Lord made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

Famine spread abroad, and many neighboring countries were afflicted with it, but Egypt, thanks to the wisdom of Joseph, was plentifully provided for.

CHAPTER XXVII.

JOSEPH’S BRETHREN COME TO EGYPT

The land of Canaan, where Jacob and his family resided, depended a good deal on the crops of Egypt; now that the produce was so reduced, the want was keenly felt in Canaan. Jacob, who had heard, that in Egypt there was plenty of corn in store, advised his sons to go there and replenish their stock of provision; all, but Benjamin went.

Arrived in Egypt, they were shown in to Joseph, who recognized them immediately. They however did not know him any more, they had not the least idea, that the man, before whom they bowed, who was attired as an Egyptian high dignitary, was their brother, whom they had sold for twenty pieces of silver.

Joseph, wishing to see whether they had repented the wickedness done him, although he understood their language, spoke unto them with the aid of an interpreter: treated them with an unusual degree of harshness, telling them that he considered them spies, who came to ascertain the weakness of the afflicted country.

The brothers, bowing down before him, protested against such an accusation. We are twelve sons of one father, they said, one has gone, we know not whither, and the youngest is home with father; but we came down to buy provisions, because famine is great in the land of Canaan. Joseph persisted in his accusation and sent them to prison, where they were confined for three days. After this they were again brought into his presence, where he told them, that he would give them a chance to prove their innocence; one of them he would keep in custody, the rest should go home, bring the youngest brother, of whom they had spoken, in order, that he might see, whether they had said the truth, when they asserted: “we are all children of one father.”

Being thus treated, the brothers spoke together in their tongue, not knowing, that Joseph understood them, saying: Such a fate we have

deserved, we are guilty concerning our brother, we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear, therefore is this distress, come upon us. "Joseph, on hearing this, knew, that they repented, turned and wept." After having composed himself, he ordered Simon, the chief instigator of the wrongs done him, to be bound and led off, the rest he sent home, having previously ordered his steward to fill their bags with provisions and replace the money with which they paid the same, along with it.

Arrived at home, they, on emptying their bags, found their money, this of course increased their fear. They told Jacob all that had transpired in Egypt and that in order to prove their innocence, and to gain the release of Simon, they had to take Benjamin with them on their next journey. But Jacob would not listen to such an arrangement and said : Lamenting the loss of one of my sons, my gray head would sink full of anguish into the grave, should any thing happen to Benjamin.

But when the provisions were nigh exhausted and Jacob saw, that his sons would not go to Egypt unless Benjamin accompanied them thither, he consented to the separation, ordering them to take double the money, they found in their bags ; and to prepare presents for the man (Joseph). And, said, the Almighty God will give you mercy before the man and he will send with you your other brother and Benjamin. Thus he resigned his sons to the mercy of Providence.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

The eleven sons of Jacob went down again into Egypt well provided with money and presents. Arrived at the place where Joseph resided, they were invited to enter. Simon here met them. Cautiously they related to the Steward that by mistake the money which they had brought on the last occasion, had been found in the bags, and they herewith wished to return it, but the Steward refused to take it, because he had no right to it. They now prepared the presents for Joseph, and anxiously awaited his arrival.

When Joseph came they all bowed down to the ground, and then delivered the presents, after which they were invited to partake dinner, and to their utmost astonishment, Joseph, who had an extra table provided for himself, assigned them seats according to their ages. They were treated very kindly, and entertained richly. Joseph made inquiry

concerning his father, whether he was still alive and well, and seeing his brother Benjamin, he greeted him saying: "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

After all Joseph had seen of his brothers of late, he knew that they repented the wrongs they had committed; but until now he had not yet ascertained whether the hatred they bore against him was not transported to his brother Benjamin. To find this a final trial became necessary.

In speaking with them during the entertainment in his house, he made frequent use of a silver cup for drinking purposes. They either supposed that by the magic power of the cup he had ascertained their ages, or on being asked how he could know that, answered to suit his purposes, that he learned it through the magic power of the cup. Joseph then ordered his steward to fill their bags with provisions, place their money again with it and to hide the cup in Benjamin's bag. At an early hour Joseph dismissed them.

Before they could have been any great distance, Joseph ordered his steward to pursue and accuse them of the theft of his master's silver or magic cup; to investigate the bags and to bring the one, in whose bag the cup is found, back, stating that he shall be a slave unto Joseph.

Soon the steward overtook and accused them of the theft of his master's silver, magic cup. Very indignant at such a false accusation, they all dismounted, opened their bags and demanded a rigid examination of its contents, saying, "Let him with whom the cup is found, die, and we all will be slaves unto thy master."

The steward began by the oldest, and finally found the cup in Benjamin's bag, he then delivered his master's message, saying, "The one in whose bag the cup was found shall return with me and be the slave of my master, the rest may go on their way home in peace. But to this they did not consent, they tore their garments in the utmost despair and grief, re-loaded their provisions and returned unto the house of Joseph to plead the case of their brother Benjamin.

Ushered again in the presence of Joseph, they all knelt down, being so overcome by sorrow as to be unable to speak. Jehudah at last stammered, that all of them were now his slaves. But Joseph told them again that all of them could go home in peace, he only, in whose bag the cup was found, should remain his slave.

Meanwhile Jehudah had composed himself, and addressing Joseph, reviewed all their transactions; he represented to Joseph the grief of

their aged father on departing from his youngest son; he then vividly depicted the misery of the old father, should they return without him; he then told, that in order to induce their father to send Benjamin with them, he had given his word of honor to bring him safely back again. He could not possibly return and see himself reproached in every tear and every sigh of his unfortunate father, he therefore proposed to be a slave unto Joseph, only to let Benjamin return home.

The common grief that so overpowered his brethren was unto Joseph a positive proof that they had changed for the better, and that not the least hate existed between them and his brother Benjamin. Convinced of this he wished to end their trials, and ordered all strangers out of the room.

He then approached them with tears in his eyes, and said: "I am Joseph, your brother, does my father yet live?" The surprise of the brothers was great, they could not speak. He encouraged them with kind words, giving them presents, doubling those of Benjamin. He then bade them go home, to tell his father of his glory in Egypt, and bring him and his family down, to live happily the rest of his days by his son Joseph.

Pharaoh had heard of the arrival of Joseph's brothers, also bid them take wagons and provisions, to return to Canaan, and to come down with their father and the whole of his family.

On departing, Joseph admonished his brethren, saying: "Do not quarrel on the way, behold you have sold me thither that I may preserve your lives, hence it was not you that done it, but God.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JACOB EMIGRATES TO EGYPT.

Returned home Joseph's brethren brought the glorious tidings to their father, his mind revived and he said: "It is enough, Joseph, my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die. Jacob at once moved from Mamreh and came to Bear Sheba, on his way to Egypt.

Here Jacob had spent the happiest days of his life, under the roof of his beloved father and mother, no wonder that, arrived here, his paternal feelings and the mission of his tribe came in conflict; the former

urged him to go down to Egypt to see his long lost son Joseph ; the latter called upon him to remain ; to ensure for his children the possessions of his ancestors, in order that they should develop to an independent tribe.

These reflections overpowered his mind so that he could not sleep. In this state he thought upon that the events happened to Joseph ; who was sold to Egypt and there rose to dignity, was a sign that a kind Providence pointed out to him, full of meaning, that Joseph and his influence in Egypt will be instrumental of gaining his object, in making his tribe a great nation. Thus comforted he started onward to the abode of his son. Jacob and his family, sixty-six persons, without the wives of his sons, the wife and children of Joseph, and a great number of servants, reached the province of Goshen, where he was welcomed by his son Joseph, who on being notified by Jehudah of his father's arrival, came there from his residence to meet him. The recognition and embrace between father and son was very affectionate. Jacob said : " Now let me die since I have seen thy face and thou art yet alive.

Joseph, when acquainting Pharoah with the arrival of his father, and introducing five of his brethren, said they are " Keepers of Sheep." Knowing that the Egyptian was religiously prejudiced against shepherds, he could so manage matters that the king would assign the little occupied province of Goshen, afterwards called Ramses, to them, where they would not be molested in their vocation. His calculation proved true, Pharoah authorized Joseph to assign Goshen as a place of abode to his father and family. Here Joseph provided them with all necessities for their support.

Jacob when introduced to Pharoah, and being interrogated as regarding his age, said : " The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years ; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and I have not attained the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

CHAPTER XXX.

JACOB'S DEATH, 2255 A. M. 1733 B. C.

Jacob lived in Egypt, in the province of Goshen seventeen years ; being then one hundred forty and seven years old, he knew the time

was approaching, when he should be called hence unto his fathers. He called Joseph and under oath commissioned him to bring his earthly remains into the land of Canaan, and to inter him in the cave of Machpelah at the side of his ancestors Abraham and Isaac, Sarah and Rebekah, and where he had interred the remains of his wife Leah. Joseph gave the requested promise.

When some time thereafter Joseph heard that his father was sick, he took his sons Menassah and Ephraim, and with them he went to see Jacob his father. Sitting up in his bed, the aged father told Joseph, that he had perceived a divine promise saying, that his offspring should become a powerful nation; in order now that Joseph's children, born unto him in Egypt, should be included in this promise, he adopted them as his own and blessed them accordingly. He then called all his sons around him, blessed every one separately, again directed them to bury him in Canaan, and then died in peace.

Joseph and his brothers mourned for their father, embalmed his remains, and together with many of the nobility of Egypt, carried him to Canaan, where they buried him in the cave of Machpelah, as he had directed them to do.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JOSEPH'S DEATH.

When Joseph, his brethren, and all that were with them, came back from burying their father, the brothers counselled together, because they were afraid lest Joseph, now after the death of their father, would requite all the evil they had done unto him.

They then sent a messenger unto him and asked his forgiveness, for all the evil they had intended to inflict upon him. Joseph wept when he listened unto them, he again answered: "Though you thought evil against me, God intended it for good; now therefore, fear ye not, I will nourish you and your families.

Joseph was now one hundred and ten years old, and still had the pleasure of educating Machir his grand son. Knowing that his remains were not admitted to be interred outside Egypt, he exacted a promise from his brethren, under oath, binding them and their respective descendants, that whenever they should leave Egypt to re-take possession of the land of their ancestors, they should remove his remains and bury him in the land of his fathers.

Joseph then died, his body was embalmed and deposited in a coffin to be removed to Palestine, when his family should return thither.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

With the death of Joseph the first book of the Pentateuch, "Genesis," closes. In reviewing the same we divide its contents into three distinct parts :

1st. An account of the Creation and subsequent development of the human race.

2nd. The life, adventures and religious developments and views of the three Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and

3rd. The recitation of facts, which go to prove that for a long term of years, nigh two hundred and fifty years, they held the undisputed possession of the country, which in after years, the children of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, claimed as their own.

The Semitic race, which was the medium of imparting the true religious idea, the primitive Religion unimpaired and unadulterated, are brought in contact with many nations, customs, and had to undergo many trials.

At the close of the present book the descendants of the Patriarchs are strangers in a strange land, where, as we shall see hereafter, they had the only chance to become a great and powerful nation.

So everything was wisely arranged by a kind Providence, to verify and fulfill the great hopes of Abraham, that his offsprings may become a powerful tribe, educated in, and instilled with his lofty and noble ideas concerning a One God, and from them the families of the earth should be blessed, in as much as they will impart unto them the doctrines and principles which alone are able to unite mankind in one happy, harmonious, loving, peaceful Union.

PERIOD II.

From the Birth of Moses to his Death.

A PERIOD OF 120 YEARS.

BIBLICAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

Joseph had died in Egypt, and with him, or near about that time, all the sons of Jacob, called Israel. The children of this generation had greatly increased and being well satisfied with the treatment received by the Egyptians, had not thought of returning to their native land, the inheritance of their sires, but made Egypt their home.

At first they were received as the relatives of the benefactor of Egypt and esteemed accordingly. Although the Egyptians, (descendants of Ham), were religiously prejudiced against the herdsmen, yet they were never molested, but left to enjoy the fertile tract of land Goshen, also called "Raamses," which Joseph had designated to them in the name of the king, where they increased in numerical strength and power.

The prejudice existing against them prevented an amalgamation. They lived in that part of the country allotted to them in perfect peace and freedom. Family relations were kept up, so that in the course of time the twelve sons of Jacob who came down to Egypt, constituted twelve powerful families, which in after years formed the twelve tribes of Israel. This undisturbed state of existence lasted nearly one century.

After the lapse of time, or in the course of the last decenium of the century, the intercourse between the Israelites, as they were called, and the Egyptians, was less cordial and less friendly. The cause that brought the Israelites to Egypt, Joseph and his wise legislation was all forgotten, the prosperity and peace of his descendants, and those of his brethren ceased.

"A new king rose in Egypt, who knew not Joseph." In the course of time it was forgotten that Joseph saved the land from starvation and

devastation, and the native-born Egyptians looked upon the Israelites, the foreigners—who lived among themselves, who did not intermarry with the different castes of Egypt, who with the utmost tenacity adhered to the doctrines and principles of their fathers,—with a kind of ill-feeling and aversion.

The new king, that arose in Egypt and knew nothing of Joseph, looked upon the herdsmen located in Raamses, as political adversaries; who, by not amalgamating with the inhabitants and keeping their nationality, forming a state in the state, were directly averse to the national development of Egypt.

A counsel of the noble men was called and the king expressed himself thus: “Behold the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land.”

The Egyptians, or rather the king’s counselors, did not like to lose the Israelites entirely, for some purpose or other they needed their presence. To disperse them among Egypt was out of the question on account of their herds, and the religious prejudice existing against them; so they resolved on other measures, by which they could neutralize their influence and stop their political growth: to make them subject to the king’s pleasure, by forcing them to be dependent upon the government for their subsistence.

How long a time it took to gain that purpose, or by what means it was attained, we know not—it is a fact that about a century after the death of Joseph, the Israelites, or the greater part of the descendants of Jacob, were serving the king of Egypt in building for him the cities Pitheom and Raamses as fortresses and provision cities.

To keep the Israelites in continual subjugation, the king had appointed over them task masters, who were instructed to exact from them a certain amount of work, and to levy any kind of punishment if the task was not completed, the task-masters complied with the wishes of the king with the utmost severity.

By these measures the government only wished to have a perfect control over the people; but when there was no more work enough to answer this purpose, a proclamation was issued, by order of which the midwives were commanded to suffocate every Israelite’s male child, they should receive.

Two midwives named Shiphrah and Puah were appointed to execute

this cruel, and unnatural design, but they feared God more than the king, and for that reason did not do his bidding.

The king on hearing this, being unable for some reason unknown, to enforce the law, and aware that in this wise he would not decrease the number of the Israelites—which to do was the paramount idea of the proclamation to the midwives—issued a new mandate that henceforth, under penalty of death, every Israelite's male child should be thrown into the river, but every female child should be left to live.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRTH OF MOSES, 2413, A. M. 1575, B. C.

The cruel mandate of the king was enforced, the male children of the Israelites were drowned.

At about this time lived a man by the name of Amrom, with his wife Jochebeth, and two children Ahron and Miriam, descendants of the family of Levi; the family of Amrom increased by the birth of a boy. The mother, in order to save her child from a watery grave contrived means to hide it for three months; when unable to hide the child any longer from the argus eyes of the officers appointed to enforce the king's mandate, she made a little basket of bull-rushes, made it water tight, placed the child therein and put it in the sea—weed on the river's side, ordering Miriam, its sister, to stand afar off to see what would happen to the child.

The daughter of Pharaoh, the king, came to the river to bathe, found the little chest, and on opening beheld a weeping babe. Having mercy on the poor infant, although knowing that it was a Hebrew child, she resolved to save it.

When Miriam saw the compassionate princess in that mood, she asked her, whether she might go and call a nurse to take care of the child, and on receiving an affirmative answer, called upon her and the child's own mother, who came and received the child from the hands of the princess, with the promise of good wages if she took proper care of it.

The mother joyously received the charge, and undoubtedly did her duty. When the boy had grown, he was brought to the princess, who adopted him as her son, and called his name "Mosheh," (drawn out of the water).

As the adopted son of an Egyptian princess, Mosheh or Moses was placed in the best hands to receive a most liberal education, by the most wise and learned priests at Pharaoh's court.

But although thus reared among the Egyptian dignitaries, Moses did not forget his nationality ; his mother had acquainted him with it, and also told him the incidents of his earlier life. He often went out to his brothers, and seeing them at work and roughly treated, contrived plans, by which means he could lighten their deplorable condition ; which he could do, because he was placed so near the king, that he had, without doubt some, if not a great influence at court, but circumstances checked his design.

Once on mixing with the oppressed people he saw an Egyptian slaying a Hebrew, when he in his anger turned upon the aggressor, slew him and covered the corpse with sand. When at another time he came to see his brethren, he saw two Hebrews in quarrel ; on rebuking the assailant he was answered, " Do'st thou mean to kill me, as thou did'st kill the Egyptian ? " Moses on finding the matter to be known, soon learned that also Pharaoh had heard of it and wished to punish him, so he fled from Egypt into the land of Midian.

CHAPTER III.

MOSES PERCEIVES A DIVINE CALL.

Arrived in Midian it was Moses' first act to assist some shepherdess whom he had seen filling the troughs, in order to water their cattle, and who were subsequently ejected from the well by some rude shepherds. Moses assisted the weaker party, seeing the gross injustice of the assailants, helped them to water the flock, after which they departed.

On coming home to their father Jethro, a highpriest of Midian, the shepherdess were asked the reason for coming home so early, which was an unusual occurrence with them. They related that an Egyptian man had assisted them against the rude shepherds. The father then ordered the man to be brought into the house, that he might show him hospitality in return for his kindness. Moses was sought, found and brought into the house of Jethro, where he agreed to remain as a shepherd. In the course of time Moses married Ziphorah, the daughter of his employer, two sons were born him, whom he named Gershom and Eliezer.

Moses lived with Jethro a long time, taking care of his flocks. All

these years were so many days of meditation, speculation and plans. On two occasions we have seen him keenly side with the oppressed, and using his power to check injustice; no wonder then, that he could not forget the oppression and miserable condition of his brothers in Egypt.

In leading his flocks to solitary places, he thought of the great mission which Abraham had assigned to his descendants, and he, being fully inspired with these holy and noble doctrines and principles, reflected on means which would be powerful enough to save the Israelites from bondage, to bring them into the land which their fathers had held as their own, and to befit them to teach by precept and example the Abrahamitic idea, which to his opinion was the mission of the Abrahamitic tribe.

Wholly absorbed with such thoughts, Moses came with his flocks to the mountain of God (called so by anticipation), Mount Choreb. Here he saw a burning bush, and presently perceived a divine call making him the representative of his people in as much as the same ordered him “And now then go and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, and thou shalt bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

The subject was not a foreign one to Moses, he had for years and years thought and reflected upon it. The mission itself he was already satisfied to undertake, the chances of its final success, as well as its great difficulties, he had well balanced in his mind; but now by making a determination to take upon himself the almost superhuman task of releasing an enslaved race from the hands of a most powerful king, and re-ignite in the hearts of this—naturally degenerated people—the holy fire of truth that had inspired their Patriarchs in all their doings—now he asked himself: If I shall be successful in the first, will I also accomplish the last, will they ever be able to contemplate on the higher truths as embraced in the doctrines and principles taught by Abraham?

With such thoughts in his soul he asked: “Behold, if I come unto the children of Israel and say unto them, the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they then say unto me: What is his name? What shall I say unto them?”

In all the traditions extant, Abraham taught by precept and example the truths of the One God under the common name, which was then applied to superior beings, God, Almighty, but in case, that name being too closely connected with the idols, worshiped by their oppressors, the

people should ask what is the name of the God of our fathers, what was Moses to answer?

To give a name unto that God would have been the ruin of his mission, because the redemption of Israel was only the means by which to carry out the great object of teaching a Universal God an inconceivable and spiritual being, as conceived by Abraham, by Isaac, and by Jacob; Moses therefore felt relieved on perceiving the divine call, again saying: "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE," and "thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I WILL BE hath sent me unto you. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, THE EVERLASTING GOD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

But once more Moses doubted, but this time it was his own ability of executing this design, he was heavy of speech; but reflecting that his older brother Ahron was a man of eloquence, and at the same time a faithful representative of Abraham's doctrines, on whom he could rely as a most powerful and most valuable ally, his determination was fixed.

On returning home to Jethro, he said: "Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, that are in Egypt, and see whether they be yet alive; and Jethro said to Moses: "Go in peace."

CHAPTER IV.

MOSES AND AHRON IN EGYPT.

The very first man whom Moses met after he had left his father-in-law, accompanied by his wife Zephorah and his two sons, was Ahron his brother.

Moses lost no time in explaining to his brother his plans and his aims, and there is no doubt that Ahron fully co-incided with Moses in all the particulars, and readily undertook to co-operate with him.

Arrived in Egypt, Moses and Ahron at once proceeded to the province of Goshen, the domicile of the Israelites, and called a public meeting of the elders of the people. To them Ahron spoke, reviewing all the plans, aims and objects to be achieved, as told unto him by Moses, and so well did he perform his first duty, that, when he had finished "the people believed, bowed down and worshiped."

Having now aroused his brethren from their torpor, (caused by the bondage), they were his natural allies, by being personally interested in the final success of the scheme. Moses and Ahron went directly to the seat of the government to open negotiations with the king in person.

In the presence of the king Moses and Ahron demanded in the name of their God, the Everlasting God, permission to be given to the Hebrews, in order to make a journey for three days into the wilderness for the purpose of celebrating a feast. To this Pharaoh said "Who is the Everlasting, whose voice I am to obey to let Israel go? I know not the Everlasting, nor will I let Israel go!"

But although the king thus boldly rejected to obey a demand asked in the name of God, he, like all tyrants, feared a general revolt by the oppressed, to subdue which, even before it was conceived, he ordered to treat the Hebrews with doubled severity. "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make the bricks, as yesterday and the day before; they themselves shall gather themselves straw. You shall not diminish aught from their work, for they are idle, therefore they cry, saying: "Let us go and sacrifice to our God!" This was the result of the demand made by Ahron and Moses.

The children of Israel, those that came into the range of the proclamation issued by Pharaoh, seeing that after the first attempt by Moses to release them, he not alone did not succeed, but they were treated more severe and cruel than ever before, became discouraged, went to Moses wishing him to stop all further operations.

Moses though, seeing on the one side that Pharaoh was troubled in mind, or else he would not have doubled the severity to crush an expected outbreak of the people, and beholding on the other side that the better class of his brethren, upon whom he had to rely most were not at all discouraged, but patiently awaiting further developments, encouraged the oppressed, promising them, in the name of the God of their fathers final success, adding that they shall once be freed and then they shall be amply rewarded for all the labors they were exacted to perform.

CHAPTER V.

THE TEN PLAGUES.

Moses on seeing, that in his further proceedings with Pharaoh, the Israelites themselves would be obstacles in his path, being not sufficiently educated to know the real point at issue — the re-kindling of the fire of love and truth to God, that inspired their fathers — he acted accordingly. Before he renewed his demands at court, he again called a convention of the Israelites, and aided by his brother he founded a gradual system of education among them, by which they were informed of the covenant, as convened between God and Abraham, the taking possession of the land of Canaan by their ancestors, closing with the encouraging remark : “And I (God) will take you unto me for a people, and I will be unto you for a God, who bringeth you out from under the burden of the Egyptians.” By this latter assertion Moses had touched that vein among the people, by which they were to be led to final success.

In the following ten or eleven years nine plagues appeared in Egypt; though not being unfrequently occurring in that region, even at a much latter period, where never known to be so severe. All of them were publicly ascribed by Moses to be the visible signs of the interference of the God of Israel in their behalf.

These plagues devastated some of the best parts of Egypt and the Egyptians, by whom Moses was considered to be a great, wise and noble man, superstitious on the one side and afraid on the other, they, some openly some secretly, believed in the supposition of Moses.

Meanwhile Ahron had accomplished an organization among the Israelites. By his zealous efforts he had revived the lost tradition concerning the teachings, the doctrines, principles of the Patriarchs, and that they had secured to their posterity a vast and fertile tract of land, which they had taken possession of and to which the Israelites now had a just and undisputed claim.

All this combined roused the people sufficiently to be of great use to Moses. Now they would follow him. The spirit of the Patriarchs was upon them. They began to realize the great hopes of Abraham, that they — Abraham’s posterity, — should be a great nation, in order to transmit his ideas concerning a One Universal Everlasting God to all people.

Arroused to such a spirit and inspired with such ideas the Israelites were fully prepared to effect their release from bondage, and enter upon the way, on the one side to re-take the property of their fathers, and on the other to immortalize the ideas, which their ancestors had wrought and taught.

Moses, on seeing the time approaching, when his efforts should be crowned with success, prepared every thing for the finale. His allies among the Egyptians were on the increase, among the Israelites he perceived the right spirit and by unmistakeable signs he saw, that the fears of the king did not diminish — now or never he could effect a glorious exode.

He accordingly went again unto Pharaoh, demanding of him in the name of his God to give the children of Israel their freedom, to allow them, their wives, their children, their cattle and all they possessed to depart in peace. The king, although discomfitted, but undervaluing the power and influence of Moses, denied this request, and to get rid of Moses, threatened to take his life, should he again appear before him.

Moses on leaving the court predicted in the name of his God, that in due course of time all the first-born of the Egyptians — among men and beast — should be slain in one night and added : “And all these, thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow themselves down unto me, saying : Get thee out and all the people that followeth thee.” Saying this, Moses left the king’s presence” in a burning anger.”

In order that the predicted event should not take the Israelites unawares and unprepared, Moses now spoke unto them in the name of the Everlasting God and legislated the following :

1st. This month, it was the spring month, “Nissan” wherein as Moses had predicted the Israelites should be released, be henceforth the first in the Calendar, — in order that the great event should be religiously inaugurated.

2d. In order to prevent the Israelites from dispersing about, when their presence should be needed, every family should on the first of the month select a lamb — afterwards called the Pashalamb — keep this until the fourteenth day of the month, when at even-tide the same should be killed, the blood of it sprinkled on the side and upper door post of their houses, undoubtedly to have an external, visible sign of the israelitish dwellings.

3th. This lamb the whole assembly, each household, are to roast, not a bone of it should be broken and thus it should be served up in the evening of the fourteenth.

To avoid all delay which might occur, they were furthermore commanded to sit down to this feast, with sandals upon their feet, staff in hand — ready to leave at a moments notice.

The words of Moses were rigidly enforced and observed by the whole assembly of the children of Israel.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXODE. PESSACH — 2493 A. M. 1495 B. C.

As Moses had predicted it came to pass. On the fourteenth day of Nissan at mid-night all first born, of man and beast, in the houses of the Egyptians were slain and there was a great *cry* in Egypt, ‘for there was no house, where there was not a corpse.’ At the same time the children of Israel sat in their houses, eating the Pasha-lamb, ready and prepared for all coming events, every family had even set dough for baking bread.

This disaster softened the heart of the proud Pharaoh and for once, forgetting that he was king, that thousands bowed down at his bidding, he in the midst of that momentous night, went to call on Moses and Ahron, who were awaiting the result at Raamses, a stronghold in the hands of the Israelites and he urged upon them to leave the land at once, they, their old and their young, their cattle and all they possessed, lest they all would die and Pharaoh added “bless me also.”

Four hundred and ten years had elapsed, since Jacob came down to Egypt; of these at least two hundred must have been of servitude; when they now departed, led by Moses and Ahron. Their number had increased abundantly, enormously; with seventy persons Jacob came down to Egypt; 600,000 men, without women and children Moses delivered from the servile work of Egypt.

The children of Israel started from Raamses, where they had congregated during the last struggle, and made their first stopping-place — a free people — in Succoth.

Arrived here Moses, in the name of God, legislated the Pessach-feast, to be celebrated in memory of the departure from Egypt, from the eve of the fourteenth day of Nissan, for seven successive days. And because the people had no time to leaven the dough, which they had prepared, for they were forced to leave in haste, rather than left to

depart from the land ; the bread, baked on the morning after the exode consequently was unleavened.

For that reason, Moses further legislated, that henceforth and for always the Israelites should use such unleavened bread on Pessach and at the same time, in order to remember the servile, hard work, that imbittered their lives for upwards of two hundred years, on the first evening of Pessach they should also make use of bitter herbs.

The unleavened bread — as immortalizing the exode and the bitter herbs as a memorial of the servitude should arouse the gratitude of the Israelites towards a kind and almerciful Providence, who has released them from bondage, to make out of them “the chosen people” his people, who were to impart to the families of the globe, the glorious lessons of a One Everlasting, Universal God, who created all, rules over all and preserves all.

At the same time, at Succoth, a stringent but necessary proclamation was issued. One law should apply to the home-born and the strangers that sojourneth with them.

This became the more necessary, as record goes to show, that many who were not born Israelites went with them from Egypt. They were always called the strangers, that sojourn among them. Hereafter the difference between the home-born Israelite and the stranger in every legal point should cease. As a matter of course the latter had to submit to the rite of circumcision.

The behest of Joseph was not forgotten. Moses took Joseph’s remains with him, at the departure of Egypt : thus the Israetites kept sacredly the promise, given to the dying Joseph, by their Sires.

CHAPTER VII.

ISRAEL CROSSED THE RED SEA.

Moses on marching from Egypt with his people to re-take the land of promise, avoided going into the land Philistia, although it was the nearest route, because he should have to force his way through a country, which was allied with Egypt, and he feared that the Israelites were not sufficiently organized to enter upon such a hazardous tour.

These considerations led Moses to chose a route, by which they had

to cross the desert. It was the longest, but beyond doubt the safest way. Accordingly they directed their steps towards the Red Sea and encamped in a place between Migdal and the Sea, before Pi-ha-Hiroth and Baal Zephon. The march was conducted by a pillar of fire at night and a pillar of smoke by day.

During these days the excitement in Egypt had subsided and Pharaoh, on learning from his spies the course the Israelites had taken, fearing, they would unite with his enemies, return and engage in war against him; and knowing the desolate place of their present encampment, he thought he would crush them at once. With his hosts of chariots and horse-men he pursued and overtook them in the camp referred to.

The Israelites, on perceiving their pursuers, began to tremble, and assembling around Moses, they cried for help. Moses ordered the break up of the camp and led them in front of the sea, all the while closely followed by Pharaoh and his soldiery.

Moses, knowing every foot of ground thereabouts, now predicted in the name of God, that here the Egyptians would find their doom; he then raised his staff and led the way through an arm of the Red Sea. The Israelites followed their leader and crossed, as on dry land.

Pharaoh, his heavy chariots and horsemen also entered upon that road, but soon found it to be a dangerous ground; the wheels, sinking in the mire, began to move with difficulty and the same happened with the horses. Struggling with these difficulties the morning dawned and with it a new danger for the pursuing Egyptians, the waters rushed back; then they said: "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians;" but the miry bed of the sea left them no means of escape and all of the pursuing enemy perished miserably, thus verifying the prediction of Moses.

Israel standing on the other side, where they were safe, looked on in awe and amazement, seeing their arch-enemy for ever crushed; now they were free in reality and need henceforth not entertain any fear nor anxiety. Giving words to this feeling they sang a song of thanksgiving to the Lord of their fathers for their redemption, which now was truly effected.

Miriam, sister of Moses and Ahron took a timbrel and followed by the women of Israel with timbrels and dance, they sang: "Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and the rider has he thrown into the sea."

From the Red Sea Moses led the Israelites into the wilderness of Shur, where for three days they were without water. They then found wells, but the waters were bitter, unfit for drinking. Moses took a sprig of a tree, threw it into the waters and thus sweetened it. This place it called Marah (bitter).

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAVELS AND TRIALS IN THE WILDERNESS.

From Marah the Israelites traveled to a place called Elim, where they found twelve wells and seventy palm-trees, here they put up the camp. From here they again started and on the fifteenth day of the second month of their departure from Egypt, they entered the wilderness of Sin, between Elim and the mountain of Sinai.

This wilderness, being entirely barren and the rations giving out, the Israelites began to suffer from hunger, and murmured against Moses and Ahron for having brought them into such a place, where they could neither sow nor earn and where in their opinion they were to starve.

Moses here learned that the Israelites did not yet value their newly achieved liberty in a proper manner, because in their dissatisfaction they said: "Would to God, we had died by the hands of God in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the flesh-pots and had plenty of bread to eat."

Moses, on seeing the whole congregation in such a commotion directed their attention to the regular fall of "Manna" that covered the ground and proclaimed in the name of God, that this manna should not cease to fall as long as their journey in the desert would last.

Here he instituted the Sabbath, by commanding, that they should collect enough manna on the sixth day to last over the Sabbath. With the exception of a few offenders they all obeyed. This is the first Sabbath, known to be observed among Israel.

Arrived at Rephidim the people again suffered, now from want of water and again they complained unto Moses. He brought them to a rock, where he effected an opening to a secreted well, and water flew out in abundance.

In Rephidim the further progress of the Israelites was interrupted by

the Beduine-king Amalek (offspring of Esau,) who, avoiding an open battle, cut off and slew the rear-guard of the Israelitish camp, consisting of the weary and faint. Moses ordered his servant Joshuah to choose men and with them to go and fight against Amalek, this was done and a glorious victory achieved, in memory of which Moses built an altar and called its name "Adonoi nissi" (the Lord is my Banner).

Shortly after this victory the father-in-law of Moses, Jethro, the high priest of Midian, who had heard all that transpired in Egypt, and the further adventures of the Israelites — came into the wilderness, accompanied by Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and his two sons, who during the struggle in Egypt had remained with their father resp. grandfather in Midian. They were invited into the camp by Moses, who, on hearing of their intention went to receive them. Moses very cordially welcomed his father-in-law prior to his entrance into the camp, where he remained for some time.

During the presence of Jethro, Moses as usual sat down to judge the people and to teach them the laws and statutes, by which they were to become the blessing of the families of the earth. Jethro, an experienced leader, saw, that Moses could not possibly endure such a life for a long time, neither could he in that wise attain his aim, so he advised him to divide the people into judicial districts, to appoint judges over thousands, over hundreds and over ten. These judges should adjust all minor cases in their resp. districts, and bring unto Moses only such cases for decision, which they could not decide. This advice Moses adopted and created judicial districts, he appointed captains, heads over the people to rule, judge etc. etc. over thousands resp. hundreds and ten.

Jethro, although requested to remain with Israel, did not feel inclined to do so and after some time he departed to Midian in peace.

CHAPTER IX.

PURIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE PEOPLE.

In the third month after the departure from Egypt, in the month of "Sivan," the Israelites came to the mountain of SINAI, and there put up the camp.

To perfect the organization of Israel as began in Egypt, it was now necessary to teach them the mission, with which they were instructed, to inculcate them with the doctrines, principles and ideas as promulgated by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that they may become “a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation.

Moses assembled the elders of Israel ; unto them he taught and expounded these doctrines, instructing them to place the same before the people and tell him, how these were received and appreciated by the public.

The answer being very favorable, it was returned unto Moses in these words : “ And all the people answered unanimously and said : All what the Lord hath spoken we will do.”

After this answer was received by Moses he gave orders, that for the next three days the people should sanctify themselves, and prepare for a great event — for on the third day the covenant, as concluded with Abraham, should be renewed from the mount Sinai, in the presence of all the people.

It was furthermore prohibited, that no one — man nor beast — should go up that mount and as a preventive a fence was erected round about Sinai.

CHAPTER X.

THE DECALOGUE. — 2493 A. M. 1495 B. C.

On the third day in the morning — the sixth day in the third month of Sivan — the people awoke in the camp, and “ thunders and lightnings and a heavy cloud was on the mount, and the voice of the cornet was exceedingly loud ; so that all the people, that were in the camp, trembled.”

Moses led the people out of the camp, placed them round about the mount, which the people saw clothed in clouds of fire and smoke

After having admonished the people again not to go beyond the erected fence, Moses and Ahron went up the mountain. Presently thereafter the assembled congregation heard a voice issuing from the smoke, proclaiming the decalogue :

"I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. --"

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything, that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow thyself down to them nor serve them; for I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And showing mercy unto the thousandth of them, that love me and keep my commandments. --"

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain. --"

"Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath, in honor of the Lord, thy God; on it thou shalt not do any work neither thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger, that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, in order that thy days may be prolonged upon the land, which the God, thy Lord giveth thee. --"

"Thou shalt not kill. --"

Thou shalt not commit adultery. --"

"Thou shalt not steal. --"

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything, that is thy neighbor's. --"

CHAPTER XI.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAW.

The decalogue given, Moses proceeded to develop the laws on this very foundation. First of all was the prohibition of perpetual slavery. It seems, that it was then a common practice for a person, who was impoverished to sell himself or one of his family as a bonds-man or bonds-woman. To disapprove of this practice, Moses thought the time had not yet come, but he legislated upon means so as to counteract the evil.

"If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years shall he serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing." Should that servant not wish to go off free, but desire to continue as a bonds-man, the master is to bring him before the judge, who after hearing the case shall cause the servant to stand at the door-post, where the master is to pierce his ear with an awl and he shall then serve him until the Jubilee.

About female servants the law was different. She could not be sold to go out free in the seventh year, like a man-servant. But the man that buys her is in duty bound to provide for her, as though, she was his own daughter.

The most stringent laws were administered in regard to the security of life and property. In the same manner laws were enacted to secure the sacred relations of the families. Filial love was looked upon as a natural law. "He that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death."

Usury was forbidden. Any pledge taken from the poor, as security for money loaned, must be remitted to him, if it is a garment or the like before sun-set, "For it is his only covering, it is his raiment for his skin ; wherein shall he sleep !"

No comments should be made against a judge, who gave his decision in good faith. "The judges thou shalt not revile and a ruler among thy people thou shalt not curse.

Moses undoubtedly thought of re-viving the primitive custom as has been prevalent by the Patriarchs, that the first born son was not alone the head of the family, but also the priest, if we may so style his functions. The first born of the sons were hallowed to the Lord to that effect.

Neither did Moses then think of erecting a religious centre. An altar of rough stones could be put up at any place, and there the first born of the family could offer a sacrifice to the Lord : for said he : "In every place where God permits his name to be mentioned, there will he come unto thee and bless thee—"

The government was entrusted to seventy elders, who were presided over by Ahron and Hur.

Moses, having now developed the law on the basis of the decalogue, legislated thus as to prohibit poverty, perpetual slavery ; to secure life and property ; to uphold the sanctity of family relations, to re-vive the primitive ideas of the Patriarchs in regard to religious ceremonials and finally had legislated upon a republican form of government. He now had perfected the desired organization, both, politically and religiously, and to his idea an absence from the camp for a short time could be effected without danger, either to the nation or to the institutions as now enforced.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

Moses departed from the camp with the understanding, that he was to be absent for forty days and left the community in the charge of the seventy elders, Ahron and Hur. Moses was accompanied by Joshua, when he went up to the mountain on purpose, as he stated, to bring down the ten proclamations, written on two tables of stone.

Towards the latter days of Moses' absence the people, on not seeing their Leader return, being dissatisfied with the state of things, not placing confidence into the government of the seventy elders, and Ahron and Hur, grew revolutionary.

They very tumultuously demanded of Ahron an idol that might walk before them on the way through the pathless wilderness, for, they said, of this man Moses, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what has become.

Ahron was not the energetic man, who could be able to govern such an agitated community. Instead of upbraiding them for such an outrageous demand, he entered upon negotiations with the revolutionists.

Bring me the jewels of your women and children, he said, and I will do your bidding. Ahron thought, that in this manner he could gain time to co-operate with the better class of the people, to appease the agitated minds, and by so doing give him time to await the return of Moses.

But Ahron was deceived in his plan. The people spurred by religious fanaticism, were not to be checked, they did not demand the jewels from their women and daughters, they took them by force and brought it to Ahron, again demanding him to make them an idol.

Ahron caught by his own advice, could no more rescind; to appease them was an impossibility, the excitement being too great, so he took the gold from out their hands, placed it in the fire and molded a golden calf therefrom. On seeing which, the people shouted and danced with joy, exclaiming: "These are thy gods, o Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

Ahron, on seeing the action of the people, unable to check them now, again adopted the plan of gaining time. Let us built an altar and that to morrow be a feast to the Lord, was now his plea. He thought, that a nights rest would be sufficient to calm their minds. But again he was

deceived. On the coming morning the multitude assembled round about the altar, sacrificing, eating, drinking and dancing, in short practicing all those rites, customary to the dedication of a pagan idol.

Meanwhile Moses came down from the mountain, having accomplished his task, the tables of stone were in his hand. On approaching the camp he heard the shout of the feasting multitude. Joshua thought it to be the noise of a battle, but Moses listened, and was satisfied, that it was not a war-shout. On coming nearer he saw the golden calf, the idol, and the people around it, making music and shouting.

Moses at once understood, that the people, whom he thought he had gradually led to understand the lofty and noble ideas of a Universal, Eternal God, had not profited by his lessons, and in a moment of rage and discouragement, he thought his whole mission to be a failure. Based upon these premises the decalogue, he thought, was to no purpose, so he threw the stones, where the ten words were engraved upon down on the foot of the mount and broke them.

Energetic as Moses was he lost not a minute, but entered the camp, took the golden calf and in the presence of the agitated multitude—none of them had the courage to oppose him—ground it into atoms and threw the powder into the water, demanding every one to drink of it, thus he learned to know all those that remained faithful to God. Upon these he called, and besides many others, who did not take any part in the revolutionary proceedings of the rebels, there assembled around him all the sons of Levi. These he appointed executioners, and with the edge of the sword every one should be slain, who took part in these idolatrous ceremonies. Faithfully was the word executed, and about three thousand fell, after which order was restored.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TABERNACLE.

Although order again was restored in the camp, after the outbreak was crushed and the perpetrators executed, still Moses knew, that the same could happen again and again. The people were not sufficiently educated to understand, as yet the mission, which Moses wished to assign unto them. There were many no doubt, who did know and fully understood it, among others the whole tribe of Levi, but by far the greater part of them did not. They being accustomed to idolatry,

could neither be governed nor satisfied with the sublime idea, that the One Everlasting God was amongst them; they needed to have a tangible form, a representative of Deity, to replace the idols. Moses had to change his original plan, in order to overcome these difficulties.

To begin with, he took his tent, which stood in the centre of the camp and removed it outside of it, thus severing all communication with the people save in official matters. The tent also called the appointed tent was at the same time the seat of the seventy elders, the highest authority of the nation. Every one, who sought the Eternal, went to the appointed tent.

Moses being now for the greater part of his time separated from the people, thought of arranging matters so, that he could govern his people, so that they would be satisfied with the idea as promulgated by him. Based upon his knowledge "that no man can see God while living" he must give some forms—not of Deity—but of the manners of approaching it in worship.

The result of his meditations was a change of plans. His first idea was to re-vive primitive worship—an altar of rough stones put up in any place was sufficient,—he would now erect a national sanctuary, a centre of all religious exercises; formerly he thought, that he would have the first-borns of every family sanctified as the teacher, or priests, now he would create a caste of priests, and surround them with all the pomp of eastern custom, who should conduct all religious exercises; and as teachers guardmens of the sanctuary he would elect the tribe of Levi.

These plans were probably placed before the seventy elders and by them accepted. This done, Moses left the camp in charge of Joshua, (who then already was a man of valour) and the seventy elders, and he alone went again up the mountain in order to replace the two tables of stone, which he had broken.

He again was absent forty days, then came down with two new tables, upon which were engraved, as upon the first, which he had broken, the ten proclamations.

Now, Moses thought, the time was come, when he could realize his new plans. He convoked the people, told them of the erection of a sanctuary and a standing hereditary priesthood.

This sanctuary, planned by Moses, should be the property of all, that is, every individual should feel himself identified in it; therefore the same should be erected by voluntary contributions; but not alone the sanctuary should be thus built, but the same should be the case with all the necessary implements and the garments of the priests.

The people were so pleased with the arrangement, that they brought so many gifts to be used, at the erection of the tabernacle and the garments of the priests, that it was found necessary to give public notice that enough was at hand of every article and more, so no gifts would any more be accepted

The work, thus commenced, was superintended by the artists Bezalel and Ahaliab.

The tabernacle had the following dimensions : It was thirty yards long and ten wide, and was divided into two sections : 1st, the holy-ante-room—where only priests came in and second the holy of holies, where only the high priest was to enter once in a year, on the day of Atonement. Round about the tabernacle was a space of one hundred yard long by fifty wide, where the people were to assemble during the religious exercises.

The Holy of Holies contained nothing but the ark enclosing the tables of stone. The ark proper was of Shitim wood lined in- and covered outside with solid gold. The cover was ornamented with two Cherubines with outstretched wings.

The Holy contained in the south the table for the shew-bread with its implements, in the north the seven armed chandelier of gold with the ever-burning lights and in the centre the golden altar used for scent-offerings.

The court contained a copper altar for burnt-offerings and the copper laver with water—where the priests washed themselves.

The whole was moveable. Every article was so constructed as to make it easy to carry from place to place.

The priesthood—to administer to the people—were also divided : High Priest—Ahron and always the oldest son of the family, he was to wear the breast plate, the Urim and Thumim, the shield on his forehead with the words : “Holy to the Lord ;” the priests-sons of Ahron to administer to the people, and the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi, were to assist the priests in their administrations.

Sacrifices, which henceforth only could be offered in front of the tabernacle were specified, sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, flour-offerings, offerings of incence, etc.

On the first day of the first month in the second year after their leaving Egypt A. M, 1493 B. C., Moses dedicated the tabernacle to the service of the Lord, with rites new and impressive. The same was done to Ahron, the High Priest, his sons the priests and the Levi-

tes. Two of Ahron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, accidentally died while administering before the Lord and the two remaining sons, Elazar and Ithamar took their places.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIRST CENSUS.

In the course of the construction of the tabernacle, Moses also brought his people upon a war-footing.

The seventy elders were the legislative body, the judges were installed, the priests and Levites were inaugurated to administer before the Lord; he now divided the whole nation into twelve tribes and named them after the ten sons of Jacob and two sons of Joseph.

Reuben; Simeon; Gad; Jehudah; Issachar; Zebulun; Benjamin; Dan, Ashur; Naphtali; Menassah and Ephraim.

As the leader of every tribe, Moses selected a prince of the fathers-house. Then a census was ordered to be taken in the following manner Every one above the age of twenty had to deposit a small coin, half a Shekel, as an atonement for the sin they incurred by worshipping the golden calf, which they had made. This money was apportioned to the service of the Lord in the tabernacle.

The number of the male Israelites were thus ascertained and were :

Reuben with 4 families	46,000	Prince Elizur son of Shedeur.
Simeon " 5 "	59,300	" Shelumiel son of Zurishadai.
Jehudah 5 "	74,600	" Naezhshon son of Abinodow.
Jssachar 4 "	54,400	" Nethanel son of Zuor.
Zebulun 3 "	57,400	" Aliob son of Helon.
Ephraim 4 "	40,500	" Elishoma son of Amihud.
Menasseh 8 "	32,200	" Gamliel son of Pedahzur.
Benjamin 7 "	35,400	" Abidan son of Gidoni.
Dan 1 "	62,700	" Achieser son of Amishadai.
Asher 5 "	51,500	" Pagiel son of Ochran.
Gad 7 "	45,660	" Aliasaph son of Deuel.
Naphtali 4 "	53,400	" Achira son ef Enon.

Total 12 tribes with 57 families, amounting to 403,550 men above the age of twenty,

Besides these the sons of Levi were counted. They had with eight families 32,000 men.

The census taken, Moses gave each tribe a certain place, to occupy during the march, or in camping. The centre of the camp was designated for the tabernacle, with Ahron and his sons, the tent of Moses with the seventy elders, the national council, and in the immediate vicinity were the tents of the Levites, who had the charge to erect, to take down, and to carry the utensils of the tabernacle, being superintended by Elazar, son of Ahron.

CHAPTER XV.

FURTHER ORDINANCES AND STATUTES.

A political and social organization was now perfected; the tabernacle was dedicated and the people had a religious centre. Moses now gave and ordained those ordinances which were chiefly directed to maintain the security of person and property; to secure peace and order in the camp, and to better the sanitary condition of the people. Special laws were given for the Priesthood and the Levites. An order of sacrifices was introduced and everything so arranged that they could now retake the land of promise and establish themselves as an independent nation, with an entirely new political and social organization and the monotheistic idea incorporated in their religious observances.

Of these ordinances and statutes many were given only to go into operation in the land of Canaan. Of these we make mention of but a few, to show how nobly Moses legislated for coming generations.

In order not to impoverish the land—which is always mentioned as flowing with milk and honey—the Israelites could not be allowed to plant perpetually. Six years only could they sow, in the seventh, called Shemittah, the land was to be left vacant.

In gathering in the fruits of the land, one corner of it must be left “for the poor, the orphan and the widow.” In binding sheaves the gatherers were not allowed to pick up the stalks of corn that fell down, these also were left for the poor, the orphan and the widow.

To prevent poverty a law was made, to be executed in Canaan, that no one could sell that portion of land allotted to him and his family.

In case misfortune or other causes should reduce a man and his family to poverty he could not sell the land, but only the produce thereof, and this only for a period not longer than forty-nine years. In the fiftieth year—the jubilee—the land itself returned to its original owner.

From the sanitary measures as legislated by Moses, we make mention of those laws concerning the eating of the flesh of animals. From the four-legged animals only those were allowed to be used as food which had split hoofs and are ruminant. From the fishes those only which have fins and scales. From the fowls special mention is made of all those forbidden. From the reptiles none were allowed.

The use of animal blood was strictly forbidden, also the flesh of animals that died of disease or old age,

Special care was taken by Moses to provide for the orphan and the widow; they were to be a sacred charge to the whole nation.

In all these legislations Moses is proved to be possessed of a noble mind and to be an able law giver who well deserved the name of the best legislator the world has ever produced. His only aim was to promote the happiness and the future prosperity of the nation, in such manner, that their worldly attainments would facilitate the promulgation of the monotheistic idea among all families of the earth; that through their influence superstition, darkness and unbelief would be dispelled and the human race could unite under one common bond, created, governed and ruled by One Eternal God.

CHAPTER XVI.

ORDINATION OF THE FEASTS.

Besides the Sabbath, which was first introduced, when the manna was first collected and which was again especially so legislated in the decalogue, and the feast of unleavened bread in memory of the redemption from Egypt, mention of which is made at that time—no day had as yet been set aside for feasting and special service.

Now then Moses ordained the following feasts to be henceforth observed at their specified time.

The Sabbath was again called to mind: six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh rest should prevail throughout the camp; “in spring and in fall shall they rest.”

The first feast to be observed was the Pessach festival, in memory of the departure from Egypt, the delivery from the Egyptian bondage. Pessach was to be a national anniversary, for Israel was then a nation. This feast was to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first spring month, Nissan, in the evening, and should last seven successive days, of which though only the first and the seventh should be considered holy convocations unto the Lord. During the holy week no leavened bread should be used. The first evening of the feast was set apart for a special service; the parent should then teach his child the cause of the feast, thus memorizing the eventful redemption in a worthy manner.

From the first day of Pessach in the evening fully fifty days should be counted—seven weeks—and on the last day, in the evening, the feast of the first fruit should be celebrated. This feast “Shebuoth”—Feast of Weeks—so called on account of the numbering of the days, shall be celebrated as a holy convocation to the Lord, on the sixth day in the third month of Sivan. In later years this festival has been noted as the “Day of Revelation” because at about that time, if not on that day, the decalogue was given.

The first day of the seventh month, Tishri, should be a holy convocation and a memorial of blowing the trumpets. In after years this feast was called “New Years Day,” “Day of Remembrance.”

The tenth day of the seventh month Tishri should be a Sabbath of Sabbaths, a holy day of atonement. From the ninth day in the evening until the tenth day in the evening no one should partake of any kind of food; it should be a day of affliction of the soul in order to crave pardon for sins committed.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month Tishri should be the feast of Tabernacles or booths, in memory of their sojourning in the wilderness; it should be observed seven days of whom though the first and the last only should be holy convocations unto the Lord. The three feasts, “Pessach, Shebuoth and Succoth” should also be the means of retaining the unity of the nation; because when they were settled in their land then shall they assemble from all parts of the country unto the place where the national sanctuary shall be erected, on these feasts, thus binding them together by a common tie, the Sanctuary.

These were the feasts that Moses ordained to be observed in Israel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUAILS. ELDAD AND MEDAD.

On the twentieth day of the second month the camp was broken up and the people marched toward Phelistia. After they had encamped in several places they came to a station called “Kibroth hatawah (graves of the lusty) This name was given for the following reason:

Until now it seemed that the people had been plentifully provided with meat, obtained either by trade or by hunt; this latter being the most probable as the places through which they came are known to have a great supply of animals. But having now changed direction, they left these places where meat could easily be obtained by either trade or hunt and thus suffered from scarcity of it.

The people rather than put up with these little inconveniences, began to murmur against Moses, saying: “Who shall give us meat to eat? We still remember the fish we did eat in Egypt for nothing; the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions and the garlick. But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing left of it; only on the manna must we rely.”

Moses on hearing this complaint, for once, is reported as having got angry. He felt that he could not govern the nation alone; he must have co-operators, co-workers. In order to gain this point he convened the seventy elders in the tabernacle, and there placed part of his responsibility upon them, thus making them associates in his mission.

Joshua, who was meanwhile in the camp, to look after the complainants, saw there two elders, whom Moses did not convene to the tabernacle, speaking to the agitated people in a pacifying tone. He thought this was wrong, for no one but Moses, his master and those elders, upon whom Moses did impart part of his responsibility, had a right to act in any official capacity; so he came running to the tabernacle, saying to Moses: “Eldad and Medad” are officially speaking to the people, silence them, because no one but my master and Lord Moses dare do this.

But Moses rebuked his servant. He saw in the action of Eldad and Medad nothing wrong, but to him it was some proof, that his followers in the camp were moved in the proper spirit; instead of awaiting in silence the action of the council, they stepped before the agitated people and openly took the part of Moses. Would to God, said Moses, that all people would act like them.

On the following day Quails were seen in abundance. The lusty par-

took of them in such haste and undue caution, that many of them died, having yet the meat between their teeth. These were buried in this station, and the place called “ Graves of the Lusty.”

It is here the time to remark, that not all the Israelites took part in such revolts, it was probably the smallest portion of them, but those opposing these out-breaks, to a great measure, had not the moral suavity to stand up before the crowd with their disapproval, but retired in silence and sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SPIES.

Moses now led the people direct to the frontier of Canaan, preparatory to taking the land of promise. It was now resolved to first send spies into the land, to find how strong those cities were, which first must be taken, and also to gather all information possible regarding the inhabitants, their valor, mode of living ; also regarding the produce and the proclivities of the land.

Moses chose from every tribe one of their best men, among them was Joshua, son of Nun and Caleb, son of Nebujah ; he gave them the necessary instructions and requested them to bring hence some specimen of the produce of the country, because the time was just properly selected for that purpose, it was harvest-time.

The twelve men, departed on their mission, they went up in the land from the South and came to Hebron. In the valley of Eshecol. they cut of a branche with grapes, carried it between two, upon a pole, took also some pomegranates and figs.

After having been absent forty days, they returned into the camp, and gave an account of their mission. The news of their arrival spread and soon they were surrounded by the people, who where all very eager to hear something of the land, which they were taught to consider as their own, the same being a legal inheritance from their ancestors. The answer, which they gave to Moses and the elders, in the presence of the assembly, was thus : The land, whither thou hast sent us, is indeed a land overflowing with milk and honey, and they showed the grapes, pomegranates, etc., as a specimen of the fruit produced. But the people, that live therein, are powerful, and the cities are fortified and

very large. More over we saw there the children of Anak (giants) compared with them, we were but like grass-hoppers in our own eyes. And more than this, the land is consuming its own inhabitants.

Seeing the disastrous effect, this report had on the masses, Joshua and Caleb, who also were among the spies, brought in a minor report. "We can easily go up and take possession of it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the ten defied them saying: We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.

The people, on hearing these contradictory reports, sided with the majority and retired to their tents that night discomfited and discouraged and wept all that night.

The coming morn they assembled round Moses, murmuring against him and Ahron, saying: "O who would grant, that we had died in Egypt, or that we might but die in the wilderness. And wherefore doth the Lord bring us unto yonder land, to fall by the sword: that our wives and our children may become a prey? is it not better for us to return to Egypt? And they said one to another: Let us appoint a chief and let us return to Egypt."

Moses and Ahron fell upon their faces before all the congregation of Israel; Joshua and Caleb rent their garments, tried to be heard by the agitated community, but to no purpose. The enraged populace showed signs of stoning those, that tried to avert them from their idea of returning to Egypt.

Moses, on seeing, that the people were so little fitted to carry out the great idea, which he had designated to them, now felt convinced that with this generation it would be impossible, to take the land of promise. Moses and the seventy elders adopted the best plan, that could be adopted answering these circumstances. The ten spies, that caused such a degenerating result among the people, were executed and died a horrible death. The council did not openly disapprove the returning to Egypt, silently this wish was overlooked and the following order issued.

Moses, in the name of God proclaimed, that this generation should die in the wilderness, but that their children, of whom they feared, they would become a prey to the inhabitants of the promised land, they would enter, take possession of and live in the land that overfloweth with milk and honey. Only Joshua, the son of Nun and Caleb, the son of Nebujah, they alone from all the present generation should, as a reward for their faith and truth, come into the land and receive their allotted portion of it.

But as for the rest of the whole Congregation they should die in this wilderness. For every day the spies were absent on their mission, the people shall travel one year, thus making forty years of sojourn in the wilderness, until all of the present generation have died.

Beginning with these travels, Moses ordered the camp to be broken up, in order to march off from the frontier.

Order was restored in the camp; the execution of the ten men was witnessed with awe. The minds began to be pacified. The report of Joshua and Caleb was now received and considered in quite another light.

All these considerations combined, with such a fatal travel in view—the people began to dislike the idea of going off from the frontier without making at least an effort of taking the land which they had in view.

They went to Moses and the elders, requesting to be led towards the enemy, and they would make amends for their misdemeanors; they will now make war with the inhabitants. But Moses refused to give such orders.

The people on being refused to be led to war now acted upon their own council. They marched up towards the enemy in order to take the place. But Moses, the elders, Joshua and all the followers of the government remained in the camp.

The result of this movement was fatal to the Israelites. The experienced leaders remaining at home, the party that went up were repulsed, routed and driven back by the inhabitants of Canaan to a station named Hermoh.

CHAPTER XIX.

KORACH AND HIS FACTION,

The camp broken up, Moses led the people in a westerly direction. The recent disaster had powerfully agitated the community—they degenerated. The result of this degeneration was soon visible.

Korach, out of the tribe of Levi, Dathan, Abiram and On with two hundred and fifty followers, among whom were officers, chiefs and members of the assembly, rebelled against the government, especially against Moses and Ahron.

“Ye assume too much,” the rebels said to Moses and Ahron, the

whole congregation is holy every one of them ; why then do you lift up yourselves above the assembly ?”

The excitement, created by this out-break, must have been intense and spread to such an extent, that this revolt would have ended in the worst kind of anarchy, had it not been checked in the very beginning.

Moses is reported as having fallen upon his face in utter despair, his authority was questioned by the rebels ; he was conscious of the wrong, his people were doing him, and felt miserable ; he, who ever would have been ready to sacrifice himself in order, to gain his design—to make a powerful, priestly nation of the Israelites ; a nation, that might stand as an example to the world, a kingdom of priest, and a holy nation, who were to teach and exemplify the great and noble religious truth of the One Everlasting God—he, the least selfish man ever born, was asked about his authority, asked, by the very man, whom he had freed from bondage, whom he was to transfer to a land of bounty where they would be able to prosper and to develop.

Reflecting upon all this, we can well imagine the anguish of soul, and understand, why Moses fell upon his face before all the assembly of the people.

But a man like Moses will not utterly give up to despair. He soon composed himself and calling upon Korach and his followers,—who had likely separated themselves from the rest—he spoke to them, trying to pacify the rebels in order to avoid an execution, but to no purpose, he was met with scorn and derision.

After Moses had left the rebellious faction, he gathered round himself all those, that adhered to the national government, to them he spoke in the following manner : Remove from the tents of the rebels, because the Lord will execute judgement.

Moses ordered Korach and his followers to appear before the tabernacle, each with a censer in hand, incense upon it, ready to offer it as scent-offering to the Lord. Standing there, a fire issued from the tabernacle, and the rebels were consumed ; meanwhile the place, where Korach, Dathan, Abiron and On had pitched up their tents, sunk and the rebellious party sank into the abyss and were lost forever ; they, their wives, their children and all they possessed.

This disaster threw the whole community into commotion. Every one fled for his life. When the dead were removed and the censers hallowed to the service of the Lord, a new rebellion broke out.

The congregation murmured against Moses, saying to him and

Ahron : “ It is you, who have caused the people of the Lord to die ; ” here not a moment was to be lost, or else the second commotion would have been more disastrous, than the first.

The ring leaders and their adherents were executed. Fourteen thousand and seven hundred died, besides those, that perished in the affair of Korach.

Order was now restored, the mutiny ended, camp was broken up, and the people moved to Kadesh, where according to sacred records, they remained for about thirty seven years.

CHAPTER XX.

FURTHER TRIALS IN THE WILDERNESS.

The people abode in Kadesh, in the desert of Zin. Here Miriam, sister of Moses and Ahron, died, was buried and the nation mourned for her.

Shortly after the death of Miriam, the people suffered from want of water, and the Congregation assembled themselves together against Moses and Ahron. “ And the people quarreled with Moses, and said thus. “ Oh, that we had but perished when our brethren perished before the Lord ! And why have ye brought the Congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, to die there, we and our cattle. And wherefore have you caused us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place ? it is no place for sowing, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates and water even there is none to drink.”

Moses and Ahron, on hearing such accusations, directed against them, went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle, and there they fell upon their faces.

Moments like those, must have brought agony inexpressible unto Moses, because he was not alone accused of misleading the people—this, with his noble aim in view, would but have been a trifle—but it proved unto him conclusively, that the Israelites were not at all yet prepared to carry out his designs, and although he had predicted—with the full knowledge of the fulfillment thereof—that the present generation should not enter the promised land, but should perish in the desert, he was not assured, that the rebellious influence of the people would not corrupt

the younger generation, who would occupy the land and had to enter upon the Abrahamic mission.

But as we have seen on several occasions, Moses was to be discouraged, but for a moment, he always resumed his duties, always confiding in that kind Providence of the influence of which he had as many encouraging proofs.

Also in this instance he acted upon these premises. He took his staff, and with Ahron, he brought the people to a rock, where he effected an opening to a secreted well, from which water came forth in abundance and the people drank and watered their cattle.

The place of this well was called “Meribah,” where the children of Israel quarreled.

The constant care and anxiety weighed heavily on Moses, he felt, that he could not stand the same much longer and the truth flashed before him, that he was not able to survive all those trials; he could not be with them, when they enter into the land, of which he had said, that the Lord had sworn to give it to them as an inheritance.

But Moses would make an effort to that effect. From them, who had the decree of exclusion pronounced against them, none, or very few were left, so on reaching the border of the kingdom of Edom, Moses sent messengers to the king, asking permission to go through his land with his people, in order to reach the land of their future possession; but he was refused.

“And as Edom thus refused, to permit Israel to pass through, his border, Israel turned away from him. And they set forward from Kadesh; and the children of Israel, the whole congregation came unto mount Hor.”

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH OF AHRON. ELAZAR HIS SUCCESSOR.

The passage through Edom refused, Israel moved from thence to Hor, in order to effect an entrance into their land from an other direction. Arriving here, Ahron feeling, that he was to be gathered to his fathers, appointed Elazar, his oldest son, his successor as High-Priest in Israel.

Moses, Ahron and Elazar retired to the mount Hor; here Ahron

died, being one hundred and twenty three years old, and was buried and Elazar was clothed in the priestly garments of his deceased father.

The people, on seeing Moses returning with Elazar, the latter attired as High-Priest, they knew that Ahron was dead and mourned for him thirty days.

Ahron was not a strong and independant character, as was best exemplified by the golden calf and many other incidents ; but he was a man of peace, a faithful co-operator to Moses and as such a true type of a priest after the idea of Moses.

After the death of and the days of mourning for Ahron, Moses led the people onward, towards the boundery of Canaan. Having to pass through the country of Sihon, king of the Emorites, Moses sent messengers to the king, requesting to led them pass through in peace. All that they need, they would buy and pay for, even water. But they were refused that privilege.

Sichon, not satisfied with refusing the passage, assembled his people and went forth into the wilderness, to Yahaz, to fight against Israel. In this battle the Israelites were victorious, they routed the enemy and took possession of all the cities of the Emorites, Cheshbon and all the villages thereof.

The same fate happened to Og, king of Bashan, who also refused to let them pass through his land. In a battle at Edrei, Og was slain and his land taken possession of by the Israelites. Having now taken possession of these two kingdoms, they journeyed and encamped in the plains of Moab, on this side of the river Jordan, opposite Jericho.

The tribe of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Menasseh,, now appeared before Moses saying : We have many cattles, sheep, etc., let us have this land of Sichon and Og, as our possession. To this Moses agreed and made the following stipulations in regard thereto, in the presence of the council and the people. They have to provide houses for their wives and children and huts for their cattle and those of them, who are mustered into the army, have to go, fully equipped, with the rest of the tribes into the land of promise and assist their brethren to take possession of the same ; this done, and not before, the land this side the Jordan should be their inheritance.

These conditions were agreed upon, and the arrangement concluded by both parties.

CHAPTER XXII.

BIL'AM.

The Israelites were now encamped in the land of their own, taken by conquest, at the border of the country of Moab, the same being governed by a king, named Balak.

This king, on seeing what Israel had done with Sichon and Og, apprehended the same fate at the hands of them; he therefore counseled with the elders of Midian as to the best plans, how to avoid such a disaster. This council, instead of uniting their armies, and oppose the further progress of Israel, agreed upon an entirely different course. Like all superstitious people, believing in sorcery, they agreed upon sending messengers to Bil'am, known, or believed to be a sorcer, requesting him to come on to Balak, to look from the highest point of a hill upon the camps of the Israelites and to curse them from there.

Bil'am refused to comply with the behest of Balak and his council; an other embassy was sent, bearing costly presents, with orders to use all means to make Bil'am change his design and make him come. They were successful in their efforts; Bil'am promised to come; but he sent word to Balak, that he was only able to say, what the Lord put in his mouth.

Arrived, Bilam went with Balak unto a place called Kiryoth-chuzoth, where they slew oxen and sheep in honor of Bilam and the princess that were with him. In the morning Bilam was brought unto a high place of Baal from thence he could see a portion of the Israelitish camp.

Here Bilam ordered seven altars to be put up and seven bullocks and seven rams to be sacrificed. He then spoke in parable form and said, in the presence of all: "From Aram did Balak send for me, the King of Moab, out of the mountains of the east, come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I denounce, whom God hath not denounced? and how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the tops of rocks I see Him, and from hills I behold Him; lo, it is a people that shall dwell alone, and among the nations it shall not be reckoned. Who can count the dust of Jacob and number the fourth part of Israel! May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!"

Balak, on hearing this, rebuked Bilam for not defying Israel as he

was called to do, but was told that the words were put in his mouth by God, and these only he could speak.

Balak then brought Bilam upon another hill from whence he could see also but a portion of the Israelitish camp. Here again the seven altars were built and the seven bullocks and seven rams were sacrificed. Here Bilam spoke thus : — “God is not a man that he should lie ; nor a son of man that he should repent ; hath he said, and shall he not do it ? and hath he spoke and shall he not fulfill it ? Behold, to bless I have received (the word) ; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld any wrong in Jacob, nor hath he seen perverseness in Israel ; the Lord his God is with him, and the glory of the king dwelleth among him.”

Balak, on being again disappointed, said unto Bilam : “ Neither shalt thou denounce them, nor anywise bless them.” For the third time places were changed ; Bilam now was brought upon a high place, from which he could see the whole camp of Israel.

Here the seven altars were again built and the same sacrifices offered. Bilam on seeing the tents of Israel and the whole camp in perfect order spoke thus ; “ How beautiful are thy tents O Jacob, thy dwellings, oh Israel ! As streams are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as alooe-trees which the Lord hath planted, as cedar-trees beside the water. Water runneth out of his buckets, that his seed may be moistened by abundance of water ; exalted above Agag shall be his king and raised on high shall be his kingdom. God, who brought him forth out of Egypt, is to him like the lights of the Reem ; he will devour nations, his oppressors, and their bones will he break and pierce them through with his arrows. He coucheth, he lieth down as a lion ; who shall make him rise up ? They that bless thee be blessed, and they that curse thee be cursed.”

Balak, being now for the third time disappointed, full of rage, turned to Bilam ordering him out of his presence. Before leaving Bilam advised Balak to devise another plan, by which they would succeed better than by cursing. They should endeavor to lead the Israelites astray from the service of God and abide the result.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PHINEHAS, THE AVENGER.

Balak and his allies, the Midionites, considered Bilam's advice to be a good one and resolved to bring the same into requisition. The Medionites sent lurid women in the camp of Israel, with the order to extend an invitation to the people to come and take part in the exercises at the feast of their idol Baal Peor.

The foolish and unprincipled members of the Israelites did in fact accept the invitation and went to the festivities of the idol Baal Peor, to take part therein. They returned to the camp bringing with them the lurid women they had met on that occasion.

This caused a fearful outbreak among the Israelites and Moses was forced to proclaim martial law, ordering every one to be executed who took part in the festivities of the idol.

In the midst of this commotion a prince of a family division among the tribes of Simeon, Zimri, the son of Sahu, openly disavowed the order of Moses, brought with him a Medionitish woman, before the eyes of Moses, and before the eyes of all the congregation of the children of Israel, and these were weeping by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Phinehas, the son of Elazar the High Priest, on seeing such an outrage committed by a dignitary of the people, took a javelin in his hand, went into the tent of the man and there slew both the Israelitish man and the Medionitish woman.

With Phinehas at the head followed by the better class of the people, martial law was faithfully executed; every one that took part in the idolatrous exercises was slain. Some twenty-four thousand men were executed.

Moses now dispatched twelve thousand men, one thousand from each tribe, to march into Midian and chastise them for their treacherous action. These soon returned, having achieved a signal victory; having killed five kings, among whom was Bilam the evil counselor.

The spoil, which the victors brought, was thus divided: one-half belonged to the captivators and the other half to the men that remained in the camp. Each party had to devote a certain percentage to the service of the sanctuary.

After this a new census was taken, by which it was ascertained that

the people had decreased by one thousand eight hundred and twenty men. This census also proved the fact, that all those had perished of whom Moses said, “they should not enter the land of promise.” Among the “six hundred thousand, and one thousand seven hundred and thirty” there were but Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Nabhaj, who were among those that came up from Egypt.

Moses now made provision that the land of promise should be divided among the different tribes in accordance to their numerical strength.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAW. ISRAEL'S ARTICLES OF FAITH.

Moses having concluded the political legislation, by describing the boundaries of the land of promise and ordaining the scheme by which the various tribes should receive their various portion ; by calling again on the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of Menasseh to come up to their promise as given, ere they may call Sihons and Og's kingdoms their inheritance. After all these points were systematically arranged and concluded, Moses, in the plain of Moab, opposite Jericho, proceeded to develop the law, as promulgated by him in the name of God, in order to befit Israel to realize the great hopes which their Sire, Abraham the Patriarch, had entertained, that “from his tribe a universal blessing should be issued.

Here in the plain of Moab, by the river's side, which they need but cross to enter the land hallowed to them by their ancestors, Moses once more assembled the whole congregation to deliver unto them his farewell address. He knew full well that the constant care and trouble that weighed upon him for upwards of fifty years had exhausted his strength ; to enter with them the land of promise and take an active part in the coming struggle, he felt himself too old and feeble, a more robust man must now take charge of them ; he was well satisfied to die here, in view of the land which was destined as the inheritance of the Israelites.

But it was not enough that they were politically well advised, he must also, in parting, instill those truths by which they were to become the “chosen people ;” it was not enough that the decalogue was given,

their attention must again be directed to that event, that the spirit thereof should never be forgotten; in order to accomplish his design, he now reviewed all that transpired from the days in Egypt until now, all those events and occurrences of which the present assemblage, to a great portion, were eye witnesses. He concluded that memorial speech by saying :

“ And now, O Israel, hearken unto the statutes and unto the ordinances which I teach you to do ; in order that ye may live, and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers giveth unto you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I commanded you, nor shall ye diminish ought from it ; that ye may keep the commandments which I command you. See I have taught you statutes and ordinances just as the Lord, my God commanded me ; that ye may do so in the land whither you go to take possession of it. Keep therefore and do them ; for this is your wisdom and your understanding before the eyes of the nations that shall hear all these statutes, and they will say : Nothing but a wise and understanding people is this great nation. For what great nation is there that hath gods so nigh unto it, as is the Lord our God at all times that we call upon him ? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as is all this law, which I lay before you this day ? Only take heed to thyself and guard thy soul diligently, that thou do not forget the things which thy eyes have seen, and that they depart not from thy heart all the days of thy life ; that thou shalt make them known unto thy sons and the sons of thy sons. The Lord our God made a covenant with us on Horeb. Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, we, who are here all alive this day. Face to face did the Lord speak to you on the mount, out of the midst of fire, Know therefore and reflect in thine heart, that the Lord alone is God ; in heaven above and on the earth beneath there is none beside him. And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and walk in all His ways, and to love him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”

As an article of faith, in fact the only one, which Moses taught, he promulgated these words :

“ Hear, O Israel ! the Lord our God, the Lord is One ! And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children and shalt speak of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way ; when thou liest down and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy houses and upon thy gates.”

CHAPTER XXV

CONCLUSION OF MOSES FARE WELL ADRESS.

LOVE AND JUSTICE, ETC. ETC.

Moses now again directed their attention to the laws already promulgated, in regard to poverty, to perpetual slavery and particularly impressed them to support and assist the poor. "If there be among thee, a needy man, any one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in the land, which the Lord, thy God giveth thee; thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy needy brother. But thou shalt open wide thy hand unto him, and thou shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, which his want requireth. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved, when thou giveth unto him: for because of this thing the Lord, thy God, will bless thee in all thy work, and in all thy aquisition of thy land!"

That Israel ever should feel themselves uniting in carrying out the great and lofty idea assigned to them, Moses further said:

"Three times in the year shall every son of thy males appear before the Lord, thy God in the place he will chose; on the feast of unleavened bread, and on the feast of weeks, and on the feast of tabernacles; and no one shall appear before the Lord empty: Every man, according to what his hand can give, according to the blessing of the Lord, thy God, which he has given thee."

Moses also provided against the possibility of a corruption, should the people desire to change the form of government, from a republic to a monarchy. "When thou art come unto the land, which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, and thou hast taken possession of it, and dwellest therein, and thou sayest: I wish to set a king over me, like all the nations round about me. Then mayest thou indeed set a king over thee, the one, whom the Lord, thy God, will chose; from the midst of thy brethren shalt thou set a king over thee. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: in order, that he may learn to fear the Lord, thy God. to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them, So that his heart be not lifted above his brethren, and so that he turn not aside from the command-

“ment, to the right, or to the left; in order, that he may live many days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel!”

Referring to the superstitious and idolatrous customs practiced among the nations, Moses admonished his people, to refrain therefrom. “When thou comest into the land which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among thee any one, who causeth his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one, who is an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a conjurer. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or who inquireth of the death. For an abomination unto the Lord are all that do these things; and an account of these abominations the Lord, thy God, doth drive them out from before thee. Perfect shalt thou be with the Lord thy God!”

Moses further legislated that in the land of promise three cities shall be set apart as “cities of refuge” where he should fly for safety who by accident had killed his brother; there he shall remain within the boundaries of the city until the High Priest has died, after which he may go hence; when the redeemer of the dead, his nearest kin, has no right upon him. But if after an investigation it is proved that the deed was committed, being premeditated “from the altar shall ye take him to receive his punishment.”

Concluding his address Moses said: “This law, which I command you this day, is not hidden before thee, nor far from thee; it is not in heaven that thou shouldst say, who shall go for us into heaven, take it from there, that we may do it? It is neither on the other side of the ocean, that thou shouldst say: who shall go for us over the sea, take it from there that we may do it? But near is the word, very near in thy mouth, in thy heart, to do it. See I have set before thee this day, life and the good, death and the evil. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances that thou mayest live and multiply; and that the Lord thy God may bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose thou life, in order that thou mayest live, both thou and thy seed. To love the Lord thy God, to hearken to His voice and to cleave unto Him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give unto them!”

CHAPTER XXVI.

MOSES APPOINTS JOSHUA HIS SUCCESSOR. MOSES' DEATH.

Moses, being now one hundred and twenty years old, having been under great mental excitement for the last fifty years, he felt his body give way, he became weak and exhausted. He knew by this that he was not permitted to enter the promised land and he must hasten to place the people in the hands of a leader who was able to finish the work he had begun.

In the presence of all Israel Moses said : “ The Lord thy God it is who goeth over before you ; he will destroy these nations from off before thee and thou shalt dispossess them ; Joshua it is who goeth over before thee, as the Lord hath spoken.”

Joshua was now introduced to the people as their future leader and Moses, placing his hands upon him said : “ Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid and not dismayed on account of them ; for the Lord thy God it is that goeth with thee ; he will not let thee fail, nor forsake thee.”

Moses then made the Priests and the Levites guardians of the law and with them the elders of the people ; after which he blessed Israel in general and each tribe separately.

Thus Moses accomplished his task, after which he went up the mountain of “ Nebo ” where he retired and died. The place of his interment is not known.

When the people saw that Moses did not return, they knew he was dead and the whole congregation of Israel mourned for him thirty days.

Moses had made out of the enslaved race of Israel a powerful nation ; he had inculcated them with the most sublime ideas concerning God and retribution ; he had inspired them with a love to all that is pure and left them an inheritance, by far more valuable than the promised land, the mission to develop the religious idea. Well may we say of him : “ A Godly man like unto Moses never rose in Israel and never will. His memory is blessed by all civilized nations on the globe.”

PERIOD III.

From the Entrance into Canaan,

UNTIL THE LAST OF THE

JUDGES. SAMUEL.

Comprising the Books of: Joshua, Judges and part of Samuel I.

From 2533—2900 A. M.

1455—1088 B. C.

A PERIOD OF 653 YEARS.

BIBLICAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ISRAELITES ENTER PALESTINE.

— 2533 A. M. 1455 B. C.

When the days of general mourning were ended, Joshua, the appointed successor of Moses, took charge of the people by issuing an order, to wit—that the people should supply themselves with provisions, for after three days they were to enter the land of promise.

Joshua, the leader of Israel after Moses, was commissioned by his master and teacher, to strictly abide by the laws and ordinances as promulgated by Moses, and not to depart therefrom ; he should make war upon the aborigines, enter into no covenant with any of them, until he should have restored the land to the descendants of the original owners.

Joshua, a man of valor, having made all necessary arrangements in three days, assembled the tribe of Reuben, Gad and half of Manassah, reminded them of the promise, given to Moses, that they would march along and assist their brethren in their efforts to take the land of their inheritance, and having received the answer, that they were ready to fulfill the promise given to Moses, and in fact had already ordered their men to the regular army for that purpose—he was fully prepared to enter upon the discharge of his duties as general-in-chief of the Israelitish army.

The government was the same as ordained by Moses ; Joshua, as the general-in-chief, whom all had to obey, under penalty of death ; the seventy elders, the legislative body, to support the leader in his duties, and to see that his orders were faithfully executed ; Elazar, the High-Priest, with the priests and Levites, the guardians of the sanctuary and the princes of the father-houses, as the commanders of the different tribes.

Thus every thing in readiness, to open hostilities, at a moments notice, Joshua secretly dispatched two spies to Jericho, the first city

they had to take, in order to gain all possible information of the city. The two spies crossed the Jordan, to reconnoitre the land, entered the city without being suspected, and noted all the strong and weak parts of the fortifications. They had put up their lodgings at the house of a woman, named Rahab, situated on the walls of the city.

By some means the king of Jericho had obtained knowledge of the presence of the spies in the city; he ordered the gates to be closed and instituted a rigid search for them. The hostess, seeing her guests in such imminent danger, in order to save them, hid them on the roof of her house under stalks of flax. When the officers searched Rahab's house, she did not deny that such men had lodged at her house for a short time, but that they had left just before the gates were closed, and had taken their way towards the Jordan. Hearing this, the king's officers went on that same route in pursuit, the gates being closed after them.

For three days the spies remained in the place of their concealment. When the pursuers returned, after a vain search, the spies thought of returning to their army. They told unto Rahab, that they belonged to the Israelites-camp, now encamped on the other side of the Jordan, opposite the city, and that they soon would appear to take the latter and occupy the land of their fathers. Rahab convinced of the truth of their assertions, made the following agreement with her guests; she would let them down with a rope—her house being on the wall, this could be effected from the window—and they should promise to save her and her relatives during the taking of the city.

This agreed upon, the spies were let down by the window, and having safely arrived on the ground, outside of the walls, they told their hostess to leave the rope hang, as that would be a sign to them for distinguishing her house from others, promising her again, that every living soul found in her house should be saved.

The spies then returned to Joshua, told him, that they were convinced the city could be taken, because all that they had heard and seen confirmed their belief in a good success.

Joshua now ordered the break up of the camp in Shittim and marched with his forces to the rivers' side. Having reached the ford and seeing the Israelites hesitate to enter the water, he ordered the priests, who carried the ark of the covenant, to pass before them, the priests did as commanded and when the people saw, that the ford was passable, they all followed and crossed the Jordan.

Twelve men, one of every tribe, were ordered to take up each a stone

out of the Jordan, carry it along to the first stopping place, in the land of their promise, and build an altar therefrom in honor to the God of Israel.

It was on the tenth day of the first month of Nissan, forty years after they left Egypt, when they crossed the Jordan, put up their camp in Gilgal, on the extreme eastern border of Jericho, where they put up the twelve stones as an altar.

In Gilgal Joshua ordered a rest. Pass-over was near at hand, and in order that all Israelites could partake of the Pashalamb—which was forbidden to all those that were not circumcised—and knowing that this rite was neglected by all of those who were born during the forty years travel, the people performed that ceremony while in Gilgal.

On the eve of the fourteenth day of the month, the feast of unleavened bread was celebrated by the whole community, in strict conformity to the laws of Moses. Manna ceased and the people ate of the produce of the land.

CHAPTER II.

THE FALL OF JERICO

The city of Jericho was fortified, and, at the approach of the Israelites, the gates were closed, none could come in, nor go out. This place had to be taken, because it was the opening into that fertile tract of land, which once belonged to the Patriarchs, and which now their descendants came to re-occupy.

As a preliminary to the action, Joshua ordered the priests to carry the ark in procession round the walls of the city, preceded by the trumpet-blowers and the armed men, once a day, for six successive days.

This was done in order to show, that the Lord, for the acknowledgment of whom they had entered into a covenant, of which the ark gave testimony, had sanctioned their doings, and also to attract the attention of the inhabitants, to give the Leader time and opportunity to finish all his necessary preparations.

On the seventh day—when all preparations were finished—the priests and the procession compassed the city seven times. On the seventh time, Joshua ordered them to shout, and lo! the walls sunk, the Is-

raelites entered the city, taking it by surprise and killed every one of the inhabitants, save Rahab and all those, that were with her in the house.

The fortifications of Jericho were reduced, and a curse pronounced upon him, who should again re-build the same, because in the estimation of Joshua, a fortified city here, would have been an obstacle in the way between the Israelites east and those west of the Jordan.

A previous order of Joshua was proclaimed, that no one should be allowed to take unto himself of the rich spoil, found in the city, but that it should be devoted to the national treasury.

CHAPTER III.

AHAN'S CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

The next fortified city, which had to be taken, was Ai. Spies sent there, reported, that three thousand men were sufficient to take it. Accordingly Joshua dispatched three thousand men to do that work, but these were vanquished by the valiant men of the city and thirty-six of the Israelites were slain. When they arrived in the camp, the sad news of their defeat, spread, and discouraged the people.

Joshua well understood the cause of the defeat; the spies had undervalued the strength of the city and its garrison—knowing, that this defeat would encourage the inhabitants of the country and discourage his army, he had to resort to means, by which to avert a disaster. He instituted a rigid investigation to see whether his orders, referring to Jericho, were obeyed or violated by any one of his men.

It was ascertained that Ahan, son of Carmi, from the tribe of Judah, had appropriated unto himself “a goodly babylonish garment, two hundred Shekels of silver and a wedge of gold, of fifty Shekels weight.” Ahan, being found out, confessed the deed, and divulged the place where these articles were hidden.

This was a violation of orders punishable with death; Ahan was accordingly executed, and the goods burnt with him. The valley where his execution took place was called “Emek Achor” valley of affliction

The people thinking, that their recent defeat was accounted for by

the transgression of Ahan, after executing him, took new courage. This opportunity Joshua did not lose.

He ordered a renewed attack. With five thousand men he marched in front of Ai, thirty thousand men layed in ambushade with orders to occupy the city, as soon as the inhabitants had left it, to resume the fight with the assailants; they should then fire the place and upon a signal given by the commander should issue from the city to re-inforce their brethern.

The men of Ai, seeing the Israelites approaching, gathered around their king and sallied forth to fight, but Joshua did not wait for an attack, but retreated with his men, as though in flight. By this manœuvre the men of Ai were put off their guard, and in pursuing the supposed discomfitted enemy, they left the gates of the city unguarded.

The ambushade now entered the unguarded city and fired it. When Joshua saw his orders executed, he gave the signal by which the retreating Israelites were to turn upon their pursuers, and the ambushade were to re-inforce them, thus taking the enemy between two fires.

The men of Ai, taken by surprise now turned to re-enter their city, but seeing it on fire and a host of their enemy issue therefrom, by which manœuvre they were attacked in front and the rear, lost courage and were utterly routed. Twelve thousand of them fell, the rest sought refuge in the desert. The king was captured, executed and a heap of stones placed upon his body.

Joshua had now taken possession of that part of the promised land, where Abraham had first pitched up his tent, “Beth El at the west and Ai at the east” and where he had erected an altar as a sign, that he had taken possession of the land in the name of God. Into this valley he brought the people, read to them the laws and commands, given by Moses, the representative of the Abrahamitic tribe, and they celebrated a great national festival.

Joshua here built an altar of unhewn stones, at or near the place, where Abraham had built his—and engraved thereon the words of the law, given by Moses.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GIBEONITES.

The victories achieved by Joshua over Jericho and Ai, smote the heart of the inhabitants of the land with terror. They did no more trust to their own valor and that of their people, but tried to effect a united action by the kings of the mountains and of the low lands in order to check the further progress of the Israelites ; this defensive and offensive alliance was agreed upon by many, but not by all the inhabitants.

The men of Gibeon did not feel inclined to enter into such an alliance, but knowing that the Israelites could not enter upon friendly terms, nor grant peace to any of the inhabitants of the land, on account of their idol-worship, they invented a stratagem in order to gain their point, to secure themselves peace and the possession of their land.

They sent ambassadors to Joshua, whose head-quarters still were at Gilgal, to sue for peace. Brought before the national council they appeared, wrapped in haggard clothes, carrying with them old, dry and mouldy bread and when questioned, they falsely stated, that they came from a far-off country, as their appearance would prove, because the clothes were new and the bread fresh, when they started, etc; they had heard of the great victories achieved by the Israelites and were appointed ambassadors to enter upon friendly terms with them.

Joshua, who must have been rejoiced to enter into friendly relations with foreign nations, without further inquiry into the truth of their assertion, effected the requested covenant with them, which was ratified by the Israelites on the one side and the messengers on the other, by simply exchanging their words, to uphold the articles of agreement. This done the messengers left for their home well satisfied with their success.

Israel now pushed forward on their mission to re-take the land of their fathers. On the third day they arrived at Gibeon, Cephirah, Baroth and Kiriath-yearim and were greatly surprised to find allies in the inhabitants.

They had effected a covenant with a nation inside the boundaries of Canaan, which was expressly prohibited by Moses, who was afraid that they would lead Israel astray from the worship of the One God to idolatry ; although said covenant was effected upon a false statement on

the part of the Gibeonites, nevertheless the word was given and they could not retract it.

Joshua called the Gibeonites to account for thus deceiving him, but they confessed and answered submissively: "We are in thy hands; what it seemeth right and good in thy eyes to do unto us, so do."

It was agreed upon, that because of their deception they should henceforth and for ever be hewer of wood and drawers of water for the Israelites. To this the inhabitants agreed, so, though they were saved they became dependant upon Israel.

CHAPTER V.

RESULT OF THE ALLIANCE WITH THE GIBEONITES.

The kings of Jerusalem, of Hebron, of Yarmouth, of Lachish and of Eglon now united, bent on punishing the Gibeonites for having made peace with the Israelites. It seems that the inhabitants of Gibeon were renowned for their strength and valor, otherwise the kings would not have united all their forces to bear upon the city.

Upon seeing that their city was surrounded by the enemy, the Gibeonites found means to send a messenger to Joshua in Gilgal, whom they commissioned to state these facts and request him to assist them in their hour of danger.

Joshua at once started from Gilgal and marching all night he came upon the enemy of a sudden, who, taken by surprise, and finding themselves between two enemies, the Gibeonites in their front and the Israelites in their rear, became confused and fled towards the declivity of Beth-choron.

Here a terrible hail-storm increased the disorder and the enemy fell by thousands; more of them died in the confusion, caused by the storm in the declivity, than by the sword of the Israelites. The five kings hid in a cave called Makkedah.

Being informed of the hiding place of the kings, Joshua ordered the cave to be guarded, and the pursuers not to tarry. The army of the enemy being utterly routed, the Israelites returned, whereupon the five kings were brought before Joshua, who gave orders for their execution.

The deserted cities were now occupied by the Israelites. Horam,

king of Gezer, who came to assist one of the besieged cities also was slain and his possession taken. In this wise thirty-one kings were slain and their lands occupied.

The greatest work being now completed, Joshua, in flattering terms dismissed the tribes of Reuben, of Gad and half the tribe of Menassah giving them permission to return to their inheritance, given them by Moses, on the other side of the Jordan, called the land of Gilead.

The word pledged to Moses was faithfully kept, they had assisted their brethern in the struggle with the aborigines and now departed to their homes well satisfied of having performed a sacred duty.

CHAPTER VI.

LOCATING THE TABERNACLE. DIVISION OF THE LAND.

Joshua, having now subjected a goodly tract of land under the sway of the Israelites, found it necessary to locate the centre of the people, the place of the tabernacle and the seat of the government. Gilgal, until now the principle station of the people, where the old, the women and the children remained during the struggle, had to be given up, and Joshua selected Shiloh as the seat of the government and the tabernacle, because it was the central station of the occupied districts.

To Shiloh then the Ark of the Covenant was brought and placed in a tent erected for that purpose (probably the same as made under Bezal'el in the wilderness.) Elazar, the High-Priest, the administering priests and Levites, took up their abode at Shiloh and henceforth this place was destined as the seat of the elders and the national council.

Joshua now convened the elders in order to finally divide the country unto the tribes, that had not yet a distinct inheritance. Two men of each tribe were commissioned to take a survey of the country, which should form the basis of the division. When these commissioners had accomplished their task, the national council re-assembled, and divided the lands to the tribes, in accordance to the manner as prescribed by Moses; the division was effected in the seventh year after the entrance into the land.

The aborigines were not entirely conquered as yet, but each tribe was powerful enough, to subdue those, which occupied part of the districts, which they were entitled to, according to the division, which was now effected.

Cities were laid out and apportioned for the Levites, forty-eight in number, located in all parts of the occupied districts.

Meanwhile the Reubenites, Gadites and Manasseites had, on returning home, put up an altar by the side of the river Jordan, which was a violation of the strict commands, given out by Moses. When the national council heard of this, they at once dispatched an embassy of two princes of every tribe, led by Pineahs, son of Elazar, the High-Priest, to go to the land of Gilead and investigate the matter.

The embassy arrived in Gilead, and, finding the altar erected, they spoke to the children of Reuben, Gad and Menassah asking, whether they meant this altar erected to sacrifice thereon burnt-offerings and sacrifices in utter rebellion to the Mosaic law. The latter ordained, that only in that place, where the Lord shall dwell, (where the tabernacle was erected, this being the religious centre,) such offerings should be sacrificed.

To this the inhabitants of Gilead made answer, that they meant no such violation of the law; but this altar should be a sign to their children that the Jordan is not the boundary, but that also they have part on the God of Israel, in case the children of Israel on the other side should maintain the contrary, to which purpose they called the altar "Ed" witness.

This answer, the embassy returned to the council, who was well pleased with it and thus the supposed grievances were amicably settled.

CHAPTER VII.

DEATH OF JOSHUA.

Joshua was now old and well stricken in years. The old warrior, feeling his death approaching, assembled the elders, the heads of departments, and all the officers in Israel to Shechem, where he had retired, before God. It seems, that for this occasion he also ordered the Ark to be brought there from Shiloh. Here he delivered his fare-well address.

In powerful, forcible terms Joshua exhorted them, to be and to remain faithful to the law of Moses; to worship God, and never to practice idolatry, for this would ruin the peace and prosperity of the country. He renewed the divine covenant as concluded with Abraham,

Moses and their fathers, and they promised to faithfully live up to the requirements of this covenant. He then reviewed in outlines the whole history of Israel, commencing with Terah, the father of Abraham and ending with his taking possession of the promised land. The answer of the people to all his exhortations was : “The Lord, our God, we serve, and his voice will we obey.”

In memory of this assembly Joshua put up a monument under an oak-tree, near Shechem and said : “Behold, this stone shall be among us as a witness, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which he spoke unto us ; it shall be therefore as a witness against you, that you may not deny your God.”

This admonition had the desired effect. The old warrior dismissed the people to their respective possessions. “And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders, who lived many days after Joshua, and who had known all the deeds of the Lord, that he had done for Israel.”

Joshua died one hundred and ten years old and was buried in his possession in Timnath Serach on the mountain of Ephraim. Also Elazar, the High-Priest, died and was buried on the same mount in the possession of his son Pineahs, who succeeded him in his sacerdotal office.

The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought out with them from Egypt, were buried in Shechem.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHNIEL, SUCCESSOR TO JOSHUA. — 2558 A. M.
1430 B. C.

After the death of Joshua, who led the Israelites for twenty-five years, the people degenerated gradually. Although as long as the elders lived “they served the Lord,” but when these were dead, they forgot the pledge, given by their fathers to the dying Joshua. The Mosaic law was inaugurated, but very imperfectly ; the Israelites intermarried with the aborigines, who still lived in their midst, and also learned their customs, their vices and idolatry. The tribes did not act in common, but every one attended to his own private affairs, without in the least considering the prosperity of the state.

The national council was not convened, Shiloh was deserted for this reason, the High-Priest Pineah’s could not wield any influence upon

the people, who soon fell into the habits of the inhabitants, worshipped idols, forsaking the Lord, their God.

These doings soon proved disastrous to the national prosperity. The aborigines united and tried to re-gain their superiority. The king of Messopotamia was the first, who made the Israelites tributary for eight years.

The Israelites, having now lost their independance, which was so dearly cherished, would have been lost, if it would not have been for men, that rose from time to time, patriots and men of valor ; who were called judges or leaders.

Othniel, the son of Kenaz, the younger brother of Caleb, was the first of them ; he used all his influence to make Israel reflect upon their disloyalty to the mosaical code of laws, and urged them to make amends ; he succeeded, the tribes rallied under his flag. Unanimously they revolted against Cushan-Rishatajim, the king of Messopotamia, overcame him and re-gained their independance.

For forty years Othniel judged the people, during all this time there was peace ; but after his death the Israelites again did evil in the sight of the Lord, they worshipped the Be'alim and the Astarde.

The national council was as powerless as the High-Priest ; the national unity was severed. The king of Moab, Eglon, on seeing the state of affairs, instituted a war against Israel and made them tributary for eighteen years.

CHAPTER IX.

EHUD AND SHAMGAR

Othniel was succeeded by Ehud, a left-handed man of the tribe of Benjamin, but the judge had no power, he undoubtedly tried his best to re-unite the separated tribes, but all in vain.

The troubles with Eglon lasted eighteen years, many of the Israelites sought refuge in the mountains of Ephraim ; to gain a respite they engaged Ehud to proceed to the Moabite king and pay him tribute.

Being thus engaged, the judge felt more keenly than ever the national disgrace and unsuccessful in uniting the Israelites, he determined to expell the invador somehow or other.

When he had delivered the tribute to the king, who was sitting in

his summer palace, he said : “I have a sacred word to thee, O king !” whereupon all the courtiers and attendance were dismissed and Ehud was alone with Eglon in an upper room of the summer palace. The judge then said : “I have a word of God to thee ;” the king rose to hear the message of God, this moment Ehud improved by killing the king, the oppressor of his country, with his double edged sword in his left hand.

Having accomplished his purpose, he went out, locking the door upon the expiring king and before the Moabites had discovered the deed the judge had reached mount Ephraim. Here he gathered as many of the Israelites, as he could, told them, what he had done and that now or never they could manage to expell the invaders ; they must improve the hour of confusion, which naturally followed upon the discovery of the slain king. An army was collected and an attack instituted with favorable result. Moab was driven from the country and humiliated before Israel.

The judge, succeeding Ehud, is Shamgar, but there are no accounts of him, except that he delivered Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, slaying, as the account has it, “six hundred men with an ox-goad.”

CHAPTER X.

DEBORAH.— 2653 A. M. 1335 B. C.

Ehud dead, the Israelites again re-lapsed to their old faults, they neglected the service of the Lord and again worshipped idols.

These state of things, Jabin, king of Hazar, a city in the possession of Naphthali, made use off, and made Israel tributary for upwards of twenty years. The General-in-chief of Jabin, was Sisera, who dwelt in Charosheth hagogim. The Israelites were hard pressed by the king, who is reported as having had nine hundred iron chariots.

The seat of judge in Israel was now occupied by Deborah, wife of Lapedoth, who used to judge the people, sitting under a tree between Ramah and Bethel.

When the oppression of Jabin became unindurable, Deborah sent for Barak, son of Abinoam, of Kadesh in Naphtali, ordering him to collect ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun, who had suf-

fered most by the hands of the oppressor, and with them to march against the strong position of the enemy at the river at Kishon.

Barak refused to undertake such a dangerous mission, unless Deborah was going with the army, which she reluctantly promised to do.

The army was soon collected and led by Deborah and Barak up mount Tabor. The attack upon the stronghold of Jabin was successful, the enemy was beaten; Sisera, unable to make use of his chariots in that mountainous region, in his hasty retreat, fled on foot hotly pursued by Barak and his men up to Charoseth hagogjim, the seat of Sisera. The Israelites achieved a signal victory.

Sisera himself cut off from his army sought refuge in the tent of Jael, wife of Heber, the Kenite. Here he asked for water and was kindly treated. Jael invited him to lay down and rest, whilst she would watch the pursuing army, but when he fell asleep, she assassinated him. Barak cleared the country of the oppressors and again the independance of the tribes was restored,

This heroic campaign was immortalized by a beautiful song (Judges V,) in which Deborah rebukes the tribes in refusing to aid Naphtali and Zebulun and highly lauds the two latter tribes. Deborah judged Israel forty years, during which time there was peace.

CHAPTER XI.

GIDEON.

It must have been already in the latter time of Deborah, that the southern portion of the land were attacked by the nomadic tribes of the desert, headed by the Midianites and Amalekites, who came with immense numbers on their camels, robbed and destroyed that, which they could not take along.

The Israelites were obliged to retire to the mountains, their natural castles, in order to save themselves from these invaders, and there suffered greatly from famine. This lasted seven years; the land became impoverished and devastated.

In these troubles the people again looked about for a deliverer, and by what means, we know not, Gideon, son of Joash in Ophrah received the appointment as judge. He received the message, when he was beating wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from the Medianites, who just then were upon one of their raids.

Gideon, an unassuming man, could not comprehend, how he could receive such an appointment, and said: My family is the smallest in Menasseh and I am the youngest son of my father's house; but the messenger prevailed on him and he accepted the charge.

Gideon commenced his operations in a singular manner. Knowing, that the prosperity of the nation could only be achieved by returning again to the One God, from whose service they had departed, when they adopted the idols of the aborigines and worshipped them, he resolved to act accordingly. He took ten of his servants, with them went at night to a place, where his father had put up an altar for Baal and planted a grove round about it.

Gideon and his men tore down that altar, erected one in honor of God, cut down the grove, used it for wood, took a bullock from his father's herd and sacrificed it unto the Lord Eternal.

When the people of the city saw in the morning, what had been done to their idol, grove and altar, they made inquiry and soon learned the name of the offender. Gideon would have been slain by the angry multitude, but his father Joash plead for him, saying: "If Baal is a god, he should revenge himself, if he was not, then of course no sacrilegious crime was committed by his son. Thus he persuaded upon the agitated populace to disperse and wait till the morrow, to see, whether Baal would avenge himself or not. (Yerubba'al)

CHAPTER XII.

GID'ON EXPELIS THE INVADORS.

The Midianites, being again in the land on one of their robbing raids in great numbers, were encamping in the valley of Yizre'el. Against these Gid'on, resolved to fight and accordingly, sent messengers to all tribes to send him armed men, with whom to accomplish his design.

All the tribes, with the exception of Ephraim, soon sent him their men and Gid'on found himself at the head of a respectable army. With them he crossed the Jordan and pitched his camp on Mount Gilead. In case of success the retreat of the enemy was thus cut off.

Twenty thousand men he left on the mountain, with ten thousand he descended into the plain. Here he left the greatest portion of his army and with but three hundred, who were each of them provided

with a trumpet, a pitcher with a torch-light hidden in, he went near the enemies camp; yea, so near did he approach, that he overheard some warriors in the camp talking together. They were telling each other discouraging dreams.

Gideon was soon convinced, that the enemy was not prepared for an attack and thereupon he adopted a singular plan. He ordered his 300 men to surround the camp in dead-silence, but when they should see him break his pitcher and blow in his trumpet, they all should imitate him and fall upon the enemy. His orders were executed with alacrity and the result was beyond expectation.

Aroused in the dead of night, by the 300 trumpets and the cry "For God and Gideon," and seeing the light, flashing on all sides of the camp, setting fire to the tents, the greatest confusion imaginable confounded the enemy, not knowing, where to turn to rally, they mistook friends for foes and finally left the camp in hasty flight, but the detachments, which Gideon had stationed in the plain and on the mountain, had cut off the retreat and thousands of them fell. Men of Ephraim, just come to assist in the pursuit, slew many and captured two chiefs, who were delivered to Gideon and executed.

In pursuing the wreck of the army, Gideon and his men came to Succoth weary and tired. He asked the inhabitants for bread and wine for himself and men, but was ironically refused. He threatened them with punishment and went on. At Penuel he again asked for bread and wine and was refused, as in Succoth.

Gid'on overtook the wreck of the invaders armies, routed them, captured the chiefs, whom he executed for having killed his brothers; he then returned home, chastising on the way Succoth and Penuel for having refused nourishment to him and his men, who had just then saved the country.

The victorious operations of Gid'on had so inspired the Israelites, that they offered him the seat of chief dignitary of the Republic, the same to be hereditary in his family. He refused the honor, but asked of his soldiers, who had taken large booty in gold and garments etc, for each of them to give him a nose ring, which they willingly did.

With these thousand and seven hundred Shekels of gold he erected an Ophet, monument, in his place, in memory of the event. This monument was afterwards worshipped by the Israelites as an idol and it became the disgrace of the house of Gideon.

Gideon judged the people forty years, during which time there was peace in Israel. "Midian was humbled before the children of Israel so that they lifted not up their heads any more."

Gideon died at a good old age and was buried in the sepulcher of his father Joash.

CHAPTER XIII.

THOLA. ABIMELECH.

Thola succeeded Gideon as judge of the nation. During his term of office a most terrible crime of fratricide was committed by Abimelech, son of Gid'on.

Record shows, that Gid'on left a numerous family, seventy sons, of whom Abimelech was the child of a woman of Shechem.

As soon as peace was restored unto Israel, the people again left the service of the Lord and worshipped idols, the Baalim and the Baal Berith; they forgot the services, rendered to them by Gid'on and showed no gratitude to his house.

Abimelech went to Shechem to his mothers relatives, prevailing upon them to support him in his claims, as the successor of his father. They favored his plans, supported him with money, taken from the temple of the Baal Berith, where with he engaged the services of some unprincipled men, with whom he went to Ophra, his fathers late residence, and there, horrible to relate, he slew all the sons of his father, save Jotham, the youngest one, who escaped.

Returned from that horrible expedition, the men of Shechem, and Beth Millo held an assembly under an oak-tree, near Shechem, and proclaimed Abimelech, their kinsman, as their king.

Jotham witnessed this act, standing on the top of the mountain of Gerizzim, he boldly raised his voice and said: "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, so that God may hearken unto you. The trees "went once forth to anoint a king over them; and they said to the "olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, "should I give up my fatness, wherewith through me they honor God "and men, and shall I go to be promoted over the trees? And the "trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, reign over us. But the fig-tree "said unto them, Should I give up my sweetness, and my good pro- "ductiveness, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the

“ trees unto the vine, Come thou, reign over us. But the vine said
“ unto them, Should I give up my fresh wine, which rejoiceth God and
“ men, and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees
“ unto the bramble, Come thou, reign over us. And the bramble said
“ unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me as king over you, then come
“ seek protection in my shadow; and if not, then let fire come out of
“ the bramble, and devour the cedars of the Lebanon. And now, if
“ ye have acted in truth and sincerity, when ye made Abimelech king,
“ and if ye have dealt well with Yernbba'al (Gid'on) and his house,
“ and have done unto him, according to the merit of his hands; In that
“ my father fought for you, and cast his life far away, and delivered
“ you out of the hands of Midian While ye are risen up against my
“ father's house this day, and have slain his sons, seventy men, upon
“ one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maid-servant
“ king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother; If ye
“ have thus acted in truth and sincerity with Yerubba'al and with his
“ house this day; then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also
“ rejoice in you. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and
“ devour the men of Shechem and Beth-Millo, and let fire come out
“ from the men of Shechem and Beth-Millo, and devour Abimelech.”

After having thus spoken, Jotham fled and took refuge in Be'er, a place beyond Jordan.

CHAPTER XIV.

ABIMELECH'S DEATH.

Abimelech, as was to be expected from a man, who inaugurated his reign with such an horrible act, became a tyrant. His power never reached far and he was soon disliked by the inhabitants of Shechem, his kinsmen. These, being visited once, during vintage, by Gaal, in whom they had great confidence, who openly spoke against Abimelech, they promised him their support in the overthrow of the hated ruler.

Gaal soon became a leader of an open revolt, but was not successful in his designs.

Abimelech enraged against Shechem, marched on the next morning with three divisions of his men towards the city, killing those, who could not escape fast enough. Many of the inhabitants sought refuge in the fortified tower of the idol “Berith,” deeming themselves out of danger.

But Abimelech, on being told where they were, commanded his men to set fire to the tower. He himself assisted in cutting wood, piling it up and igniting it. One thousand people, men, women and children perished in the flames,

Thola, the judge, seems to have been impotent to punish Abimelech, or the rebellious city, because no mention is made of his name in that connection.

Abimelech, encouraged by his success with the inhabitants of Shechem and seeing the national government inactive, now directed his attention to the overthrow of the national council and marched toward the seat of it.

On coming to Thebez, on Mount Ephraim, he found the city in a state of defense and prepared to take it by assault. The inhabitants sought refuge in a strong tower in the city. Abimelech intended to set fire to it. In the execution of this order, he went near to the walls, when part of a mill-stone was thrown on his head by the hands of a woman, which disabled him.

Being ashamed, that history should speak of him, as being slain by a female, he demanded of his servant to kill him with the sword, which was done. Thus ended the first attempt to overthrow the Republic. Abimelech's reign lasted but three years.

Thola remained in office for about twenty-three years. His administration is noted for no other event, peace reigned in his time. He was succeeded by Havoth Jair, a Gileadite, who ruled twenty-two years.

CHAPTER XV.

YIPHTACH.

During the twenty-five years following, three judges ruled in Israel; of whom we know but little; Ebzon seven, Elan ten, and Ahdon eight years.

The national council being powerless, the influence of the High-Priest greatly diminished, the tribes acted for themselves, no unanimous action promoting the welfare of the nation was aimed at nor executed; it is therefore not to be wondered at, that the aborigines, after being driven out of the land at one time, came ever and anon to molest

the Israelites. Among other enemies now it were the Amonites, that troubled the men of Gilead exceedingly.

Being thus exposed to the outrage and ill-treatment of the Amonites the elders came together and offered unto Yiphtach, a mighty man of war, the chief dignity of the nation, in case he should deliver them from their enemies. He promised to do so and the arrangement was concluded at Mizpah, where Yiphtach met the representatives of the people.

No time was to be lost, because the enemy had taken possession of the plains of Gilead. Yiphtach sent messengers to the king of Ammon, asking, by what right he was attacking the Israelites in their land. The king answered, that he was only re-taking, what was taken by the Israelites from his predecessor.

Having received his answer, Yiphtach called to arms, and when he had a sufficient force collected, he marched toward the enemy, to meet them in open battle.

Before attacking the enemy, Yiphtach made a vow, that, in case he should be victorious, the first living object he should meet on coming home, should be devoted to the Lord.

The attack was made and successfully carried out, the enemy was routed. Yiphtach re-took about twenty cities, that had already been in the hands of the Ammonites.

On returning home with his victorious army, after having pursued the enemy, the first object Yiphtach met, issuing from his house, was his own daughter, who came forth to greet her father with joy and songs as the deliverer of his tribe.

Yiphtach, on seeing his daughter, tore his garments in token of grief and utter despair. He told her of the terrible vow he had vowed; but she, in words expressing the noblest sentiments of filial love and submission, exhibiting at the same time a patriotic joy regarding the victory, achieved by her father over the enemy of her people, expressed herself willing to be the victim of the vow of her father. She only asked for two months, to go unto the mountains and lament her fate, which request was granted. After that time she returned and the vow of Yiphtach was fulfilled.

The daughters of the land made it a rule to bewail the fate of Yiphtach's daughter, four days in each year. Yiphtach judged but six years.

CHAPTER XVI.

SAMSON.

The Philistines, who were always on the alert, to invade the country, whenever they had a good opportunity to do so, and having received no check to their design for a long time, overflowed the possessions of Dan, who were thus compelled to defend themselves constantly.

The national government was powerless, no unity of action existed.

When the troubles with the Philistines increased to such an extent, that it became un-endurable, Samson rose to defend his country.

The father of our hero "Manoah" had no children for a long time and when finally his hopes for an heir were realized, he and his wife, both, father and mother destined their son to be a "Nasir." His hair was never to be cut and all the laws of Moses concerning the Nasir were to be strictly observed.

The lad grew up, and being informed, that he had ever to abide by, and adhere to certain rules, by which the Nasir was distinguished from others, the idea connected itself with it, that he was also destined to be the deliverer of his people.

Samson early showed signs of extraordinary strength; he must have been quite young, when he took part in a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines in the territory of Dan, between Zereà and Eshtael.

At Timnah, a settlement of the Philistines, he saw a woman, whom he desired his parents to go and ask in matrimony for him. His parents assented, proposed the union and he was accepted.

On the way to Thimnah to celebrate his engagement, Samson killed a lion. When next going the same way to celebrate his wedding, he saw in the carcas of the lion a swarm of bees, which had deposited honey therein.

Sitting with his companions at the table by the wedding feast, he gave out the following enigma: "Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." It was agreed upon, that if they could solve his riddle within the seven days of his feast, he was to give them thirty changes of garments, but if unable to do so, he was to receive the same from them.

The Philistines were unable to solve the enigma and went to Samson's wife, threatening, to burn her and her father's house, if she would

not persuade her husband to tell her the solution, which she was then to betray to them so that they might be the winners. Fearing the revenge of her countrymen, she worried her husband so long, that he finally told her his meeting with the lion etc., which solution she revealed to the party.

On the seventh or last day of the feast, Samson was not at all surprised to see, that he had lost the bet, his companions knew the solution. He went to Ashkelon, slew thirty Philistines and with their garments he paid his lost wager; but being angry with his wife, for thus betraying him to his foes, he left her and returned home to his father's house.

Some time thereafter he came into the house of his father-in-law, to see his wife, but was told, that she was given in wed-lock to an other. Enraged at such proceeding, he, to avenge himself, caught three hundred foxes, bound them together tail to tail, placed torches between and after igniting them chased them into the corn-fields of the Philistines, thus utterly ruining the crops.

The Philistines, on knowing the perpetrator, took his wife, her father and all they had and burnt them. In return, Samson done them all possible harm, smiting as many of them as he could lay hands on.

Exasperated by these bold actions committed by a single individuel the Philistines collected an army, invaded the territory of Jehudah, demanding the delivery of Samson, who had made his stronghold on the top of the rock Etam.

Being waited upon by a delegation of the men of Jehudah, who told him of the peremptory demand of the Philistines, Samson consented to being fettered with robes and to be thus handed over to the enemy.

The Philistines, on seeing the bound foe, raised a great shout of joy, but the rejoicing soon turned into lamentations. Samson tore the robes like thread and falling upon the surprised enemy he slew about a thousand of them.

On an other occasion Samson went to Gaza, also a Philistine settlement, and entered a public house. The men of Gaza surrounded the house, determined to assassinate him, but failing in courage they did not attack him by night, but deeming it more advisable to wait with it until day light. Samson rose at mid-night, secretly left the house, went to the gates of the city and finding them closed, he unearthened the posts, took hold of them and the gates and carried the whole of it to the top of a mountain, in the vicinity of Hebron, where the astonished Gazaites in the morning found the gates of the city deposited.

CHAPTER XVII.

SAMSON'S DEATH.

Samson then formed an attachment for an other Philistine woman, Delilah, residing in the valley of Shoreck ; whom he visited frequently, although she lived in the enemies territory.

The Philistines, on hearing of Samson's inclination to Delilah, promised that woman a large sum of money, if she would contrive to deliver him into their hands. The treacherous woman consented and on several occasions delivered him bound into their power, but every time, by his personal strength and probably by the aid of his friends, he frustrated their design, and often were the Philistines beaten in their own country.

Such adventures made him bold, and he went to Delilah, wherever she chose to see him. On one of those occasions she beguiled him into a place, where a great armed force of the Philistines were secreted ; here she induced him to drink, and when he was in a state of excitement, she lured him to tell her the secret of his strength, to which he stated, that it was his hair, the sign of a Nazarite. When asleep, she took a scissor, cut off his luxuriant hair, bound him and called her countrymen to take him off. They entered and to disable him entirely,—he probably was not quite aroused from his stupor—they blinded him.

The blind Samson now was a prisoner to the Philistines, who brought him to Gaza. Here the captivators rejoiced to have in their power their most dangerous enemy. A feast was celebrated, to praise their idol, for having delivered him into their hands. The blinded hero was brought before them, to be the aim of the wits and scoffs of the feasting multitude.

The leaders having allowed Samson the free use of his arms, he rested with them upon two pillars, upon which the roof and the galleries principally rested. He was surrounded by the princes and nobles of the Philistines and about three thousands spectators, who all found pleasure in mocking him.

Being enraged by the mocking and scoffing of his foes, the blind hero once more collected all his remaining strength and clinching the pillars firmly with the cry : "Now will I die with the Philistines" and broke them

The roof and the galleries thus were hurled down and buried under its ruins our hero and thousands of the foes. Thus Samson died after having used his extraordinary strength to humble the Philistines, for upwards of twenty years.

— CHAPTER XVIII. —

WAR AGAINST THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

During the period of the judges, we have seen, that an unanimous feeling in Israel did not prevail. The national sanctuary was neglected, thus the influence of the Priesthood was broken ; nominal judges were only called into requisition from time to time to preside over the whole, or part of the nation as circumstances demanded. In those times every one acted according to his own pleasure, to promote his own interest, without in the least considering the welfare of the whole.

At that time the men of Gibeá, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, committed an atrocious crime on a Levitic woman. The husband of the outraged and murdered companion, communicated with the chiefs of the several tribes, who, on hearing of such a dastardy act of the men of Gibeá, called an assembly of all Israel to Mizpah, where the sanctuary then was located. There the Levite related again the manner, in which the citizen of Gibeá acted, which resulted in the murder of his wife.

The men of Israel unanimously resolved to chastise the guilty parties and messengers were sent to the tribe of Benjamin, demanding the delivery of them, that they may receive the just punishment for the crime, committed by them; but Benjamin refused to comply with the request of Israel and prepared to resist, should an army be sent to enforce obedience.

Three battles were fought. In the first two the valiant men of Benjamin sieged over Israel, but in the third Israel routed Benjamin, only six hundred men of them escaped to the vicinity of the desert.

Previous to these battles, the men of Israel swore, that henceforth they would no more have any intercourse with Benjamin ; they would not intermarry with them. The tenets of this oath would have ultimately resulted in the utter destruction of the tribe of Benjamin.

The people, on re-assembling before the Lord at Beth-El, were

grieved about it, that by their own oath one tribe of Israel should be doomed to destruction, so they thought upon plans how to obviate such result.

It was ascertained, that the inhabitants of Yabesh in Gilead did not take any part in the war against Benjamin, and consequently had not attached their names to the oath. For neglecting to side with Israel, the city was severely chastised; four hundred damsels found there, were given to the fugitives of Benjamin, with whom a treaty of peace was concluded; they were then allowed to go to their possessions and replenish the tribe.

The two hundred Benjamites, who were not yet provided with wives were advised by the elders of the nation, to lie in wait in the vine yards, in the neighborhood of Shiloh at a certain time, when a feast was to be celebrated, to waylay and carry off any damsel, that came out of the city to take part in the dance and bring them home as their wives. The elders promised to appease the enraged fathers, brothers and other relatives of the damsels thus taken.

The Benjamites did according to this counsel and in this manner the oath, as sworn, was kept, and the tribe of Benjamin was nevertheless accorded the means to remain intact. The tribe was saved.

CHAPTER XIX.

RUTH.

In the time of the judges a famine was in the land, or probably only in some parts of it, and a man from Bethlehem in Jehudah, Elimelech with his wife Naomi and two sons, Mahli and Chilion, moved from their home to live in the territory of Moab; but Elimelech died soon and left his widow and her two sons in a foreign country. The two sons married Moabitish women named resp. Orpha and Ruth.

Noami was about ten years in Moab, when her two sons died in rapid succession. The deprived widow and mother now resolved to go back again to her own country, because she had heard, that the Lord had remembered again his people and gave it plenty of food.

Accompanied by her two daughter-in-laws she set out on her journey. Both, Ruth and Orpha insisted on going with her; Naomi requested them to return and remain in their native country, because she could be of no use to them, being deprived and poor herself.

Orpha hereupon kissed her mother and returned, but Ruth said : “ Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return, from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death, part thee and me.” Thus Naomi was silenced and both went on.

The two widows arrived at Bethlehem; the property of Elimelech, her late husband, was sold, subject to the mosaical redemption law. The people of the city wondered and said : “Is this Naomi (the cheerful),” but she answered : “The Lord has afflicted me, so call me henceforth Morah.” (the bitter) The time of their return fell into the harvest time of barley.

CHAPTER XX.

RUTH SUPPORTS HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Noami had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty, valiant man, of the family of Elimelech, named Boaz.

Ruth asked permission of her mother-in-law to go into the fields and glean the corn after the reapers, in order to earn a scanty support for both; her request being granted, she went on her errand and happened to come upon the fields of Noami’s kinsman Boaz, where she modestly asked the privilege of gleaning and was kindly allowed to do so.

Boaz, coming from Bethlehem to oversee the work of his reapers, accosted them with the usual greeting : “The Lord be with you,” to which they replied; “May the Lord bless thee.” Upon seeing Ruth, diligently gleaning the corn behind the reapers, he made inquiry about her and was told, that she was the Moabitish woman, that came with her mother-in-law Noami, that she came in the morning, asked permission to glean the corn and this granted, she was very diligent, resting but little.

Boaz, having already heard of the love, Ruth showed to his kinswoman Noami, went up to her, and treating her kindly he told her to have always an eye upon his workmen and to always glean after them and remain with his maidens. Hearing this, she bowed and gratefully said : “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take cognizance of me, seeing, I am but a stranger.”

Boaz answered : "It hath fully been told me, all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law after the death of thy husband ; and how thou hast forsaken thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy birth, and art come unto a people, which thou knowest not yesterday, nor the day before. May the Lord recompense thy work, and may thy reward be complete from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to seek shelter."

At meal-time Ruth was invited to partake of the food, prepared for the reapers ; she accepted gratefully, ate and spared some of the food to bring it home to her mother ; when she had again commenced to glean, Boaz instructed his workers to treat the woman kindly, to manage it so, that she would find more corn than would be usually the case if they would be careful, and extending unto her a standing invitation to remain upon his fields, mingle with his maidens and also take her meals with them, he departed.

Ruth gleaned until night ; when she came home she had collected an Ephah of barley, which she gave to her mother and also the food she had saved.

Noami made inquiry about the man, upon whose field she had gleaned to day, and hearing, that it was Boaz, her kinsman, she said : "Blessed be he unto the Lord, who hath not withheld his kindness from the living and from the dead." Being further told, that the man had advised her to be always behind his reapers as long harvest would last, Noami was well satisfied, because : "The man is nearly related to us, he is one of our next kinsmen."

Ruth gleaned only upon the fields of Boaz throughout the harvest and was so diligent, that she was soon liked by all. She returned every evening to her mother, bringing home the earnings of the day ; in this manner Ruth supported Noami.

CHAPTER XXI.

BOAZ TAKES RUTH AS HIS WIFE.

Meanwhile Boaz had instituted inquiries in regard to the Moabitish woman, that worked so diligently, in order to support his kinswoman Noami and he ever admonished his workmen to see to it, that Ruth should have good gleanings.

Harvest over, Noami told to Ruth, that, because Boaz being one of

her nearest kinsmen, he was by law bound to release the property of his deceased kinsman, if called upon so to do. This law was given by Moses, in order to prevent perpetual poverty; should the kinsman fail to release said property, the same will return to its original owner in the Jubal year.

Now Naomi had a nearer kinsman than Boaz, but she very likely had her reasons not to ask that one to release her husband's estate; so she advised her daughter-in-law to go to Boaz, when he was merry, having housed a good crop, and ask his protection as a relative and a kinsman. Ruth did as requested to do by her mother-in-law.

Boaz, on being thus petitioned, all his better feelings at once enlisted. He had, by personal inquiries, found how virtuous this Moabitish woman was, and saw, how diligently she was at work, how modestly she did demean herself and how kind she was towards Naomi, her mother-in-law, he formed a strong attachment towards Ruth and promised her all his protection, and sent her home, after giving her some provision for his kinswoman.

In the morning Boaz met the nearest kinsman of Elimelech's estate and summoned him at once before a council of ten men—whose seat usually was under the gates of the city.—Here he stated to the court the claims, which Naomi and Ruth had legally on their nearest kinsman and he publicly requested him to do his duty; to release the estate of Elimelech, and if possible, to take in wed-lock Ruth, the fair Moabitish woman, who forsook father, mother, relatives and country and faithfully remained with her mother-in-law, in order to provide for her in old age.

The nearest kinsman would probably have released the estate of Elimelech, but as to taking Ruth in wed-lock, he could not do it and conveyed his rights in the presence of the court to the next relative Boaz.

Boaz now turned towards the court and said: "Be witness, that on this day I have purchased all that belonged to Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion, and at the same time I make use of my right to take unto me in wed-lock the widow of Mahlon, Ruth, the Moabitish woman. And all the people present said: We are witness! The Lord make the woman, that comes in thy house, like Rachel and Leah, which two built up the house of Israel, that thy power increase in Ephroth and thy name spread in Bethlehem."

So Boaz took Ruth as his wife. When in the course of time a son was born to Ruth, the women went to Naomi and said: "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not allowed to be wanting unto thee a kinsman this day; and may his name become famous in Israel. And may he be unto thee, one who refresheth thy soul, and who nourisheth thy old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, hath borne him, she, who is better to thee than seven sons."

This child was called Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David, the renowned king of Israel.

CHAPTER XXII.

ELI, THE HIGH-PRIEST. BIRTH OF SAMUEL.

It is already mentioned, that the Israelites had greatly degenerated since the death of Joshua. Every tribe followed his own way, working out his own interest, without reference to the whole nation; the national sanctuary was neglected; the influence of the Priests was broken; the religious unity shattered.

In this time falls the administration of Eli, the High-Priest at Shiloh, in whose ministration again falls the birth of Samuel, the regenerator of the Israelitish nation.

Eli had two sons, Hophni and Pineahs; but soon these proved themselves unworthy to succeed their father in his sacerdotal office, they were very licentious and frivolous. Eli was told of the misdemeanor of his sons, but he was too lenient with them and unable to correct their faults.

So matters were at Shiloh, when a man from Ramathaim Zophim of the mountain of Ephraim, Elkanah, son of Yerocham, as he was want to do yearly, came to Shiloh to sacrifice unto the Lord; he was accompanied by his wife Hannah, who was very much depressed at heart, on account of having no children.

Being in the sanctuary Hannah prayed unto the Lord in silent devotion and made a vow, that when he should grant her request and bless her with a son, the same should be dedicated to the service of the Lord.

Eli watched the woman as she was standing there, her lips only moving, no sound was heard, and thought she had too freely partaken of wine and rebuked her on that supposition. But when Hannah

told him, that she was not drunk, but that she had prostrated her heart before the Eternal, because of her sorrow and misery, for said she: "Out of the abundance of my grief and vexation have I spoken hitherto." Hearing this Eli answered: "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant thy petition, which thou hast asked of him."

Elkon and Hannah departed, and in that year a son was born unto them, whom they called Samuel. "Because from the Lord I have asked him,"

When Samuel was of the required age, Hannah, never forgetting her vow, brought him to Shiloh, presented him to Eli and said: "Pardon my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman, that stood by thee here, to pray unto the Lord. For this lad did I pray, and the Lord hath granted me my petition, which I asked of him; Therefore also have I lent him, for my part, to the Lord; all the days that have been assigned to him, shall he be lent to the Lord."

Samuel was accepted and kept by Eli in the sanctuary, as the servant of the Lord, and it speaks well for the lad, that the evil example of Hophni and Pineahs, who were as violent, as licentious and frivolous as of yore, could not corrupt him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOSS OF THE ARK. DEATH OF ELI.—2877 A. M. 1111 B. C.

Samuel was administering before the Lord in Shiloh and was rapidly gaining favor by the people, that came to sacrifice before the Eternal, so that by the time of his maturity he was considered a true Prophet by all Israel from Dan until Bersheba.

At about that time a war broke out between the Philistines and the Israelites. Israel camped at "Eben Haeser" and the Philistines at "Aphek." A battle was fought and the Israelites were slain. A council was now held and resolved, to send to Shiloh and bring the Ark of the Covenant, that the same should be in their midst, assisting them in the forthcoming battle.

So far had they deviated from the true spirit of Religion, that they did believe, the Ark alone would be sufficient to ensure them success against their enemies.

The Ark was brought, accompanied by Eli's sons, Hophni and Pineahs. In the forthcoming battle, contrary to their expectation, the Israelites were routed, Eli's sons were killed and the Ark itself fell into the hands of the Philistines. About thirty thousand Israelites were slain.

A man from Benjamin escaped from the battle field, came to Shiloh with his clothes rent and earth upon his head and there spread the news of the disaster, that had taken place.

Eli was sitting by the wayside watching, "for his heart was anxious for the Ark of God." The sad news excited the inhabitants of Shiloh, they lamented and wept. Eli, hearing this, called the man and made him relate all he knew. Gradually the aged High-Priest learned all, that the battle was lost, that his sons were among the dead and that the Ark of God fell into the hands of the enemy. Hearing the latter news, Eli fell from his chair and expired. He was ninety eight years old.

The wife of Pineahs, on hearing the news of her husband's death, the demise of her father-in-law and the taking of the Ark by the Philistines, she gave birth to a son, and dying, she named the child "I-chabot" saying: "Glory is departed from Israel; for the Ark of God had been taken away."

Eli had judged Israel forty years.

The Philistines, after capturing the Ark, brought it to Ashdod and placed it into the temple of their idol Dagon. In the morning it was found, that the idol was prostrated on the ground before the Ark; the priests raised it again, but by the next morning the idol was found in pieces on the ground.

The inhabitants of Ashdod being greatly alarmed by the constant increase of sickness in their midst, ascribed it to the presence of the Ark and therefore sent it to Gath, but sickness being also there prevalent, it had to wander to Ekron, but when also there sickness and plagues spread rapidly, the elders of the Philistines resolved to return the Ark with rich presents to the Israelites after having kept it for seven months.

The Ark was received by the Israelites at Beth-Shemesh, from thence it was brought to Kiriath-Yearim into the house of Abinadab, whose son Elazar was engaged as its watch and guard. Here the Ark remained for twenty years.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ADMINISTRATION OF SAMUEL AS JUDGE.

After the death of Eli, Samuel, who was then already well known among Israel, was raised to the highest dignity of the nation. He became judge of Israel.

Samuel, a true and loyal follower of the Mosaical institutions, had in his youth gone through the best schools; he was educated under the eyes of Eli, the High-Priest in the national sanctuary, and being devoted unto the Lord by his pious mother, he was looked upon by Eli, who knew, that his sons by their misdeemeaner, had lost all claim in the estimation of the people, as the successor to his high and responsible office.

The more Samuel kept aloof of the violent Hophni and Pineahs, the more he devoted himself to the administration before the Lord, as assigned to him by Eli, the more did he gain the entire confidence and trust of all those, that came from time to time to Shiloh, to sacrifice unto the Lord.

Samuel, now raised to the dignity of Judge, entered upon the functions of his office with the avowed determination, to use all his efforts, to strain all his energy, to restore Israel not alone the political independance, which they had lost in the struggle with the Philistines, but also to revive the lost national unity, and to re-awaken among them, the knowledge of that mission, which to perform was assigned to them by Moses, to acknowledge and worship the One God and abolish all idol worship.

In order to gain his designed aim, Samuel called into life the following important institutions :

- 1st. He erected Prophet-Schools, in which young men were taught and befitted for the responsible position as teachers of the people, as expounders of the word of God. With these young men—his natural allies—he fought with word and deed against idolatry and disbelief and achieved his object to a great extent; idolatry was abolished and the worship of the One God restored in due course of time.
- 2d. He instituted yearly assemblages, thus re-gaining the lost national unity. In these assemblages the welfare of the nation was debated and measures adopted, how to promote

the same. By these means the scattered tribes were united and called upon to devise plans to benefit the common-wealth.

- 3d. He established judiciary circuits; Bethel; Gilgal and Mizpah, where he went at least once a year in the exercise of his official duties. The whole nation, having but one judge, still in this manner no tribe was excluded from the benefits of this institution.

Soon the benign influence of Samuel's administration was every where visible. The altars of the idols, bereft of their supporters were discarded; many of them, no doubt, were destroyed by Samuel, his scholars and his followers; the people had learned to trust their united strength and justice was dealt to all alike.

CHAPTER XXV.

WAR WITH THE PHILISTINES.

The Ark of the Covenant was now about twenty years at Kiriath-Yearim in Abinadab's house. All this time Samuel used to perfect his designs. The schools were established and the teachers graduated there found favor in the eyes of the people; idols were abolished and Israel worshipped the One God; the yearly assemblages were well attended and a unanimous action of all Israel was attained; "all the house of Israel followed anxiously after the Lord."

Meanwhile the Philistines had retained their supremacy over Israel, nothing was done to check their power; the advantages, they had gained at the last battle, in the time of Eli, they still maintained.

When Samuel now assembled the people at Mizpah, where he ordered a court to be in session, the nation deliberated upon means, how to regain their independance from the Philistines. Samuel, a patriot of the purest dye, wished to perfect the national unity ere they entered upon such a struggle, he therefore ordered a feast before the Lord; a sacrifice was offered and Samuel prayed to Jehovah in behalf of the assemblage.

The Philistines deeming it dangerous to allow these assemblages to pass unmolested, because they knew, these were the means to unite the nation; basing upon the knowledge, that they were hardly able to resist the assaults of the united Israelitish forces, and having heard,

of the assemblage in Mizpah, they collected their armies in front of the city in battle-array, thinking probably, to take the Israelites by surprise.

But here their power was broken, they were greatly humbled. The Israelites united, having made their peace with God, led by Samuel, went forth full of courage and hope in the assistance of the Lord. In the midst of the battle a storm arose, the loud thundering confused the Philistines and they fled, hotly pursued by the Israelites, as far as Beth-car.

A signal victory was achieved, in memory of which Samuel erected a stone between Mizpah and Shen and called it "Eben ha-ezer" saying: "As far as this hath the Lord helped us." The territory of Israel was now again freed from the Philistines, all the cities they had conquered were re-taken.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PEOPLE DEMAND A KING.

Peace was restored throughout the territory of Israel. Samuel returned to Ramah, where he had a house, and where he built an altar to the Lord.

Samuel fully believing, that the Republican form of government was the plan, which Moses had laid down for Israel, and thoroughly convinced, that by this mode of government alone the Israelitish nation could prosper, he acted accordingly. In his idea the highest office of the Republic should be a judge, an able leader, both religiously and politically.

Samuel had probably the idea to make this office hereditary in his family; acting upon this he appointed his sons Joel and Abiyah as judges in Beer Sheba. But the sons were unlike their father; "they inclined after their own advantage, and took bribes and perverted justice."

Seeing danger for the nation in such a corruption, the elders of the Israelites assembled at Ramah and spoke to Samuel: "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons have not walked in thy ways; now appoint for us a king to judge us, like all the nations."

This matter was very disagreeable to the aged Republican and he turned unto the elders, asking, whether they knew, that a king had the

privilege of taking their sons as soldiers, their daughters as servants, their best fields as rewards for his nobles and that to support the kingdom, they had to give a tenth of all their produce, in livestock and fruit.

The people listened, but did not coincide with his views and said in answer to all he had spoken: "No, but a king shall be over us. That we may ourselves be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles."

Samuel, on seeing, that the people were bent upon establishing a monarchy, advised the elders to "go ye every one unto his city;" thus intimating, that he would attend to the appointment of a king, as they had demanded.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PEOPLE ELECT A KING.—2900 A. M. 1088 B. C.

At about that time Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, lost some asses. to search and restore them he dispatched his son Saul, who had worked upon the estates of his father, into the country. Saul went with his servant, but could find no traces of the lost animals. Being near Ramah in his search, the servant advised Saul to go to the house of the Prophet and make inquiries there.

Entering the city, Saul met a concourse of people, among whom was Samuel, who were going to attend a public dinner or a similiar festivity. Samuel, on seeing Saul, perceived, that this man, "who was a head taller, than his followers" was a fit subject to be made king over Israel, which the elders had demanded of him to appoint.

Acting upon this thought Samuel invited Saul to the feast and there showed him great honors; and at the point of seperating Saul was surprised to hear from the mouth of the Prophet, that he was destined to be king over Israel.

Samuel now called a public meeting to be held at Mizpah, in order to finally settle the question regarding a king. In this assemblage the Prophet exhorted the people about their policy, that though they are aware of the great and glorious deeds, the Lord, their king and God, had wrought for them, they demand a king, but they were determined upon and an election was ordered.

The election should prove first, which tribe should have the honor to furnish a king—Benjamin was found ; secondly, which family from Benjamin—Matri was seized ; thirdly, which man—and Saul, son of Kish, came forth from the ballot and he was consequently pronounced to be king over Israel.

On looking for Saul, the people could no where find him, because he was hidden under the baggage ; when brought forward he stood erect amid the people and was greeted with the words : “Long live the king.”

With this action of the people, although objections were raised by some, the Republic had virtually ceased and upon its ruins a Monarchy was raised.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

This Period lasted 367 years ; from 2533 A. M. 1455 B. C. until 2900 A. M. 1088 B. C.

There were many causes that induced the Israelites to establish a kingdom instead of retaining the republic.

The struggle with the Philistines were renewed almost in every generation, the same may be supposed to have been the case with the rest of the aborigines. In the time of the judges it was often difficult, if not impossible, to unite the israelitish forces for common action, every tribe was depending upon his own strength, and although Samuel had effected a union among the tribes, his sons were apt to destroy what he had built.

The judges were chosen, or appointed, as we have all reason to believe, by their pre-decessors in office and shifted from one tribe to another. In the course of 367 years every tribe with the exception of Asher had at least furnished the nation one judge, Ephraim and Jehudah and Levi each two.

In the selection of judges the appointing officer was not always happy in his choice ; of several of the appointed we know nothing, but that they were very rich. None of them, Samuel excepted, had effected a religious and political union ; most all of them appear in times of trouble and are not using any influence, which they might have

had, in time of peace. None of them, but Samuel, had crushed idolatry and revived the service of God.

It was by Samuel's zealous efforts, that these evils were brought to public notice, in order to avoid them hereafter. The people, now awakened to a sense of duty, regarding the united nation, might have well been afraid, that after the demise of Samuel, whose sons made it already probable, these evils would re-occur again.

To avoid which the people chose a common chief, a king, whom they would elevate to the royal office and royal duty; to maintain the integrity and independance of the nation; to forward all the institutions as laid down by Moses and last, but not least, to enforce the mosaical laws.

At the close of this period we see, that the national sanctuary was visited regular, that judiciary circuits were established and that the chief magistrate could call extra meetings before the Lord at any time and at any place within the limits of Canaan.

Regarding the priesthood, as ordained by Moses, we are at a loss to know, who succeeded Pineahs, no mention is made of any High-Priest until the time of Eli, whose sons were not worthy to succeed him.

Samuel, though not from the descendants of Ahron, by virtue of his being hallowed to the Lord by his mother Hannah, officiated as priest, we see him erecting altars and offering sacrifices.

With Samuel begins the era of the prophets, seers, inspired men and from this time forward we meet them almost upon every page of the jewish history.

The Prophet-schools as founded by Samuel were the best means to educate such men, as would fearlessly and voluntarily oppose all such evils as would destroy the national unity or the national Religion.

PERIOD IV.
PART I.

From the first King of Israel

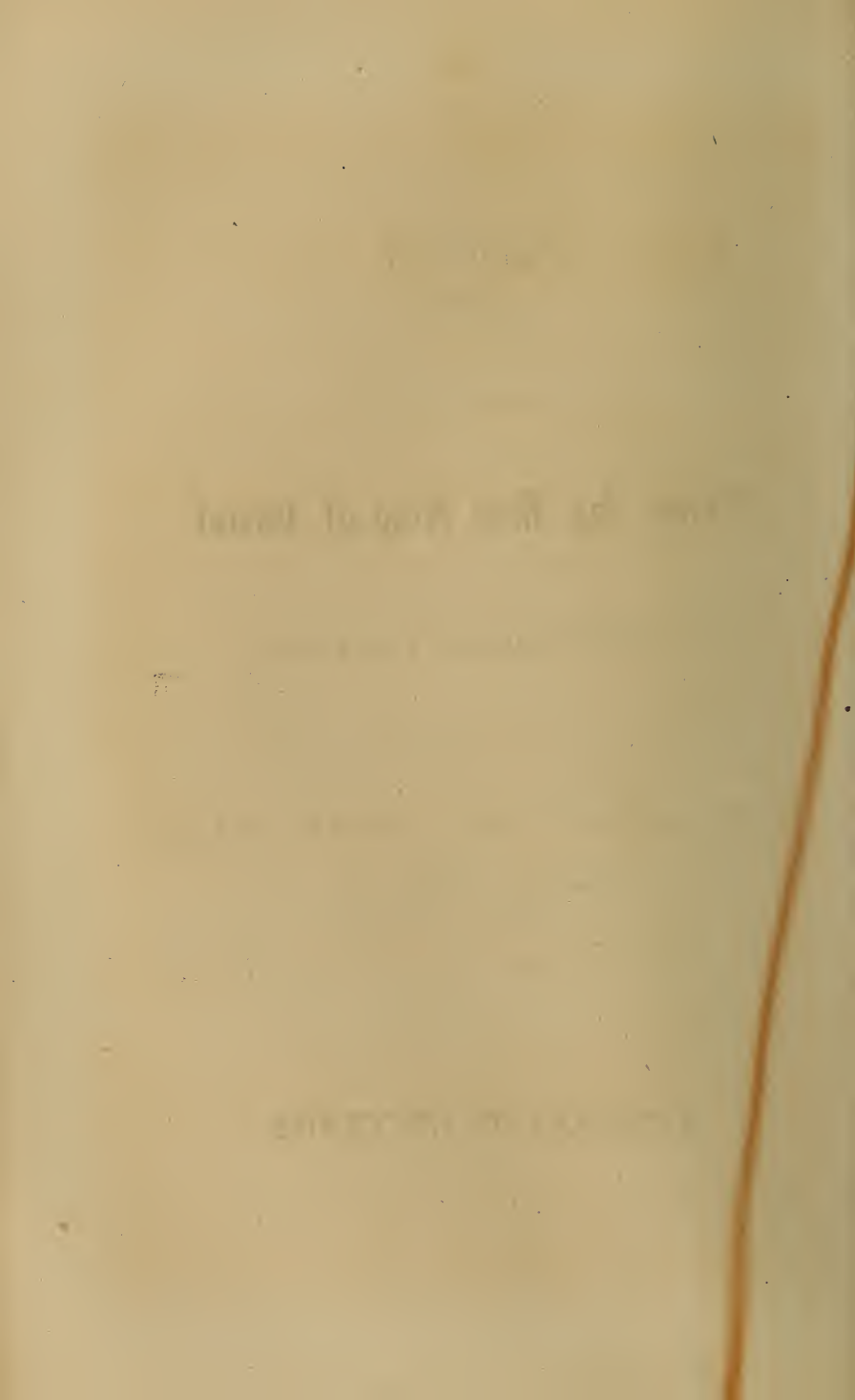
TO THE DIVISION OF THE NATION.

Comprising the books of: Samuel I., Samuel II., and Kings I.

From 2900 to 3010 A. M.

“ 1089 to 978 B. C.

A PERIOD OF 110 YEARS.



BIBLICAL HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

SAUL ACKNOWLEDGED KING BY ALL ISRAEL.

Saul, although elected and pronounced king at Mizpah, did not at once enter upon his royal functions, he returned to his agricultural pursuits upon the estates of his father. His reason for so doing was undoubtedly this : The people did not all look with favor upon the newly created kingdom, and still it needed their united support to maintain it ; he therefore went home, as though nothing had happened abiding his time and waiting for favorable circumstances, which should assist him in supplanting his royal prerogatives upon the ruined republic government.

Such circumstances, as Saul hoped for, soon came to pass and as will be seen, he did not lose his chance.

Nachesh, the king of the Ammonites, made war with the men of Yabesh-gilead ; these were very much discouraged, and wished to enter into a covenant with Nachesh, (by virtue of which they would agree) to serve him.

Nachash, wishing to bring shame and reproach upon all Israel through the men of Yabesh-gilead sent back the following answer : "On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that you all have put out the right eye."

The elders of Yabesh answered, that they wished to have seven days time given them, in order, that they could send messengers throughout Israel ; should at the end of that time there be no chance of their being saved, they would come out to him, and he could then do according to his word.

Messengers were sent to the different tribes, to arouse the sympathy of their brethren to their lamentable state and come to the rescue. These messengers also came to Gib'ah, where Saul lived, delivered their message, hearing which the people began to weep and lament.

Saul just came home from the fields behind his herds, and seeing the people in such a state of excitement, he inquired the cause, and was told the danger of the men of Yabesh.

This was the expected opportunity to lay the foundation of his kingdom and Saul did not lose it.

Acting on the impulse of the moment, he took a yoke of oxen, cut them in pieces and these he sent throughout all the boundary of Israel saying : "Whosoever goeth not forth after Saul and after Samuel, shall have his herds thus treated."

Wherever this message came the people hastened to the rescue of their brethern of Yabesh ; on the one hand, because they considered it their duty to save their brethern from such a shameful outrage, the reproach of which would for ever fall back upon the entire nation ; on the other hand they knew, that Saul, the elected king, had the right and the power to make his word good. "And the dread of the Lord fell on the people, and they went out as one man."

Saul numbered his men at Bezek and it was found, that Israel had furnished 300,000 and Jehudah 30,000 men.

The messengers of Yabesh were sent home with the words : "To-morrow shall ye have help, when the sun shineth hot." Hearing such gladdening tidings, the men of Yabesh rejoiced and sent word to Nachash : "To-morrow we will go out unto you and ye can do unto us in accordance with all that seemeth good in your eyes."

At the dawn of day Saul had arranged his men in three companies, and with them he surprised the Ammonitish camp in the morning watch. In the ensuing battle the Ammonites were slain and at mid-day, when the sun was shining hot, Nachash and his army was routed, so "that those that remained were scattered and no two of them were left together."

In this action Saul must have acted and been talked off as king, because the people said unto Samuel : "Who is there, that saith, Saul, Saul reign over us, give up the men and we will put them to death " But Samuel put an end to all such words by ordering an assemblage at Gilgal.

Here Saul was re-elected king and acknowledged as such by all Israel. Samuel, in sanctifying the kingdom, gave some very appropriate advice to both, king and nation, basing them upon the Mosaical laws. Thus the first constitutional monarchy was firmly established.

CHAPTER II.

SAUL AND HIS COURT. HIS MISDEMEANOR. JONATHAN'S DANGER.

Saul now organized a standing army of three thousand men. Two thousand he kept under his direct command in Michmash and one thousand he placed under the command of Jonathan, his son, in Gib'ah, in Benjamin.

All this time the Philistines were very annoying to Israel. The very fact, that the Philistines had carried off from Israel every smith, so that the Israelites had no means to make swords, nor to sharpen their plow-shares, speaks for a long succession of years, in which the Philistines had again re-gained supremacy over Israel.

Saul was determined to gain the independance of the nation from the aborigines. To begin, with the sanction of Samuel, he called upon his men to assemble in Gilgal to prepare for war.

Meanwhile Jonathan had slain the out-post of the Philistines in Gib'ah, whereupon these gathered their forces, "30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen and people as the sand, which is on the sea-shore in multitude; and they came up and encamped in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven."

The Israelites, being very poorly equipped, having no swords, no lances, (only Saul and Jonathan were provided with such) upon seeing the great forces of the Philistines, they lost all courage and many of them—the greatest portion—hid in rocks, caves, thickets and strong-holds.

Samuel, having not yet arrived at Gilgal to sacrifice unto the Lord in behalf of the people, and Saul, seeing the enemy steadily approaching and his men dispersing in discouragement, he acted as priest by sacrificing unto the Lord himself.

Although the deed (the act of sacrificing) may be extenuated by the imminent danger and the absence of a priest, Samuel, though he had promised to come, did not arrive, still it was neither part of his royal privilege nor in any case allowed for a lay-man to minister before the Lord.

Samuel just arrived when Saul had finished the sacrifice. The Statesman saw in the action of the king a determination to supplant the priesthood, in order to have all the influence upon the people

centred in the person of the king, making him the political and religious chief of the nation. Samuel deeming it important to retain the priesthood in their primitive legacies, to guard the law, and be even antagonistic to the king, should he at any time neglect to carry out the statutes as laid down in Gilgal, now seeing their prerogatives added to those of the king without authority, and thinking this a dangerous precedent, he spoke to Saul reproaching him for doing, as he did and added: "But now thy government shall not endure, because thou hast not kept what the Lord had commanded thee." Saying this, Samuel left Gilgal and went to Gib'ah of Benjamin.

Saul numbered his men and it was found, that the army under his and his sons command had dwindled down to about six hundred men, of which only the king and his son had swords, because no smith was left in the land to make these weapons.

The hostile armies, if the six hundred men of Saul, equipped only with arrows and slings, could be styled an army, encamped on opposite heights.

Jonathan, a valiant youth, left the camp with his sword bearer upon an adventurous expedition. Coming near the out-post of the Philistines, both were mocked and scorned at, but Jonathan, seeing his advantage, sallied forth, and slew about twenty men, which action caused a confusion throughout the camps of the enemy.

The commotion was, noticed by the watchers, and it was reported to Saul, that "the multitude became scattered, running hither and thither." Saul ordered a muster, perpatory to enter upon the battle.

The Ark of God was in the camp with the administering priest, Achiyah, grandson of Eli, Saul called his men together and published the following order: "Cursed be the man, that will eat food until the evening, until I have been avenged on my enemies."

After the promulgation of this order the Israelites went forth, and finding the Philistine camp in such commotion, they had an easy victory. The Israelites, who had hidden, on seeing the enemy fly upon all sides, also came out and increased the army of Saul by many; and they joined the army in a rigid pursuit all that day.

Jonathan, not knowing any thing about the order, issued by his father, weary and exhausted, on coming through a wood, took some honey from a tree and ate it.

When the enemy was driven to their country amid a great loss, Saul gathered his men, and on hearing, that Jonathan had broken his com-

mand, he would have kept his word literally, in having Jonathan killed by a court-martial decree, but all the people pleaded the case of the hero of the day and the word was revoked.

After this siege Saul established his court. The king's family consisted of Achinoam, his wife, Jonathan, Yishoi and Malkishua, his sons, and Morab and Michal, his daughters. As captain of his army he appointed Abiner, son of his uncle Ner. Besides those Kish, his father and Ner, his uncle, are mentioned as belonging to the court.

Saul fought successfully with Moab, Ammon, Edom, Zobah and the Philistines "and whithersoever Saul turned him he caused terror."

CHAPTER III.

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE. SAMUEL LEAVES HIM.

Samuel considering the danger accruing to Israel from their idolatrous neighbors, especially through the Beduine tribe of Amalek, who was already troublesome to Israel in the wilderness, in Moses time, demanded of Saul in the name of God, to make war upon Amalek and to banish him and every thing belonging to him.

Saul, gladly accepted that mission, because it gave him an opportunity to make his peace with Samuel; he called his men to Telaim, where he numbered them. He had now an army of two hundred thousand on foot and ten thousand of the men of Yehudah.

After mustering his army, and before entering upon hostilities, Saul sent word to the Kinites—a friendly tribe that dwelt amid Amalek—requesting them to depart from the midst of Amalek, "less I destroy you with them." The Kenites obeyed Saul's behest and moved to other quarters.

In the ensuing battle Amalek was utterly routed from Chavilah until Shur and the king Agag was taken prisoner. But Saul disregarding Samuel's admonition, took pity on the king and the best of the spoil and did not destroy either.

Samuel went to meet Saul, but not finding him, was told: "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set himself up a monument, and then went about, passed on, and went down to Gilgal."

When the king and prophet met, Saul greeted Samuel saying: "Blessed be thou unto the Lord, I have performed the word of the

Lord.” Samuel answered : “What is then this bleating of the flocks in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear ?” To this Saul answered, that these are the best of the spoil of Amalek, and that it was saved in order to sacrifice it unto the Lord.

Angrily the prophet now said : “Hath the Lord as much delight in burnt-offerings and in sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to attend, more than the fat of the rams. For the sin of witch-craft is rebellion, and idolatry and image-worship, stubbornness ; in as much as thou has despised the word of the Lord, he hath also despised thee, that thou shalt not be king.”

Saul tried to extenuate the deed and craved Samuel’s pardon, requesting the prophet to go with him, that he may prostrate before the Lord, but Samuel would not listen and turned upon his heels, in order to leave. Saul, seeing this, took hold of Samuel’s mantle, in order to persuade him to remain, but the garment was rent asunder. “Thus, said Samuel, hath the Lord rent the kingdom from off thee this day, and hath given it to thy associate, who is better than thou.”

Saul, confessing his guilt, now begged the prophet to only honor him in the eyes of the elders and of the people, by returning with him. To this Samuel consented. Saul prayed before the Lord, after this Agog was brought and executed by Samuel.

Samuel departed and saw Saul no more, for he went to his home Rameah, where he mourned for Saul. The king left and went to Gibah, where he had established his court.

CHAPTER IV.

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID. SAUL IS TROUBLED IN MIND.

¶ Samuel, thought mourning for Saul, thought it his duty, to place an other man, a better one, upon the throne of Israel ; a man, on whom he could rely, who would not think of crushing the priesthood nor of diminishing the influence of the prophets ; because these institutions, Priesthood and Prophets, were in Samuel’s views essential as neutralizing the dangerous ambition of a king.

Samuel had not spent all his life in the service of the people, without gaining a great influence and not even the king, just coming from a

battle, where he achieved a signal victory, commanded such a high regard as he did. When therefore the separation of the Prophet and the king had become a public rumor, Saul's kingdom lost one of its most formidable pillars,—the sanctification of religion—.

Samuel did not mean to remain idle; he had caused this crisis and must also bring it to a glorious issue. He had raised scholars enough already, who were dispersed all over the land; from them and from others on whom he could implicitly rely, he gathered all possible information, regarding a successor to Saul.

After long and due consideration Samuel was satisfied, that he would find, what he was in search of, at Bethlehem, in the house of Jesse, an aristocratic family from the tribe of Jehudah, and there he went. The elders of the city came out to greet him with the salutation of peace and were told to sanctify themselves, because he came to sacrifice unto the Lord.

To this sacerdotal feast Jesse and his sons—he had eight—were invited; but only seven could be present, because the youngest, David, was in the fields, taking care of the flocks. Samuel, looking on those present, found among them not a fit subject for his plans, but being positive, that the information, he had received, was true, he asked Jesse, whether these were all his sons and upon receiving a negative answer, he caused a messenger to be sent to call David home from the field.

David came and found grace and favor in the eyes of Samuel; this must be the person pointed out to him by all reports received and he accordingly anointed him in the presence of his brethern, as the future king of Israel. This done Samuel left for Ramah, and David went to his usual avocation.

Meanwhile Saul had by many indications seen, that his kingdom was fast declining; the word of Samuel, as spoken to him at Gilgal, he now knew, would become true; and for that reason he grew dispondent and very much troubled in mind; to overcome this evil disposition, he was advised to engage the services of a musician, who should play before him upon an instrument, whenever his mind was troubled, by which means he would feel relieved. This wholesome advise was accepted and messengers dispatched to search for a good musician and bring him to court.

Now David was a good player upon the harp; his name was mentioned to the king and accepted, whereupon a servant was sent to Jesse

with the royal request. David came to the court and whenever the king was gloomy, he relieved his darkened spirit by the strains of his instrument.

CHAPTER V.

WAR AGAINST THE PHILISTINES. DAVID SLAYS GOLIATH.

The Philistines had meanwhile gathered their forces, to again re-gain their supremacy over Israel; they put up their camp at a mountain Ephess-dammim, between Sachoh and Azekah in the possession of Jehudah. Saul and his men had formed in battle array opposite the Philistines in Elah.

David, although at court, had not altogether given up his vocation at home, he often went to see his father and attended to the flocks. He was home when the war with the Philistines broke out.

Three of Jesse's sons were serving in the army and David was sent into the camp to bring them some provision, and inquire after their well-being. So David came into the camp.

Now there was among the Philistines a man of great prowess, a giant, named Goliath of Gath, who was the champion of the Philistine army; he came forth and spoke to the Israelites saying: "Why will ye come out to put yourselves in battle-array? Behold! I am the Philistine, and ye are servants to Saul! select for yourselves one man, and let him come down to me; If he be able to fight with me, and he kill me, then will we be unto you as servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be unto us as servants, and ye shall serve us."

Thus the Philistine defied the Israelites for forty days, but Saul and his men were discouraged and no one could be found to hazard upon such a dangerous single combat.

David had greeted his brethern Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah, when Goliath just came out to defy Israel. On seeing, the men of Israel flee from before the giant in fear and dismay; David made inquiries concerning the man saying: "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the arrays of the living God",

and he was told all about him and that Saul had promised, to give his daughter in marriage to the man, that would slay the Philistine and also make his family free for ever.

The brothers, on seeing David's determination, to enter upon the combat, rebuked him severely, but he turned from them and went on in his inquiries.

The report spread and Saul hearing of it, that David wished to fight with Goliath, made him come and said : "Thou art not able to go unto this Philistine to fight with him ; for thou art but a lad, and he hath been a man of war from his youth." But David said, that he had already killed a lion and a bear, that invaded his flocks and added : "The Lord, who hath delivered me out of the power of the lion, and out of the power of the bear, will also surely deliver me out of the hands of this Philistine." To this Saul answered : "Go, and may the Lord be with thee."

Saul now placed his own coat of arms upon David, but he could not walk in it and put it off, took his staff, his sling, selected five smooth stones from the brook, put them in his shepherds pouch and went to meet the Philistine.

When Goliath saw David approach him he said disdainfully : "Am I a dog, that thou comest unto me with sticks"? And he cursed David saying : "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field."

David answered : "Thou comest unto me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin ; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the arrays of Israel, that thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand ; and I will smite thee, and remove thy head from thee ; and all the earth shall know, that there is a God for Israel. And all this assemblage shall know that the Lord saveth not through sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's."

When now Goliath drew near unto David, the latter took his sling, chose a smooth stone, aimed, and threw it so skillfully, that the stone entered the Philistine's forehead and he fell upon his face. David ran to the fallen giant, unshielded the enemy's sword and with it Goliath's head was severed from his body.

The Philistines, seeing their champion fall, fled in confusion and

the men of Israel raised a war-shout, pursued the enemy as far as to the gates of Ekron. The whole Philistine camp fell into the hands of Saul's army and they made a rich spoil.

CHAPTER VI.

JONATHAN'S FRIENDSHIP AND SAUL'S ENVEY TO DAVID.

After this siege over the Philistines Jonathan entered into a covenant of friendship with David, because he loved him "as his own soul"; he clothed him in his own robe and gave him his own sword and girdle.

David was henceforth not permitted to return home, but was assigned a charge with the men of war, where he soon won for himself the estimation of his men and the servants of Saul.

The victorious army returned and were greeted everywhere by the words : "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." The king grew angry because David was preferred to him and he said : "They have given unto David ten thousand, and unto me they have given the thousands ; and all that he lacketh now yet is only the kingdom."

From this day forward Saul looked with jealousy upon David, and when on the next day the king was evil disposed and David was playing his harp before him, Saul raised his spear and threw it towards David, who, seeing the danger turned and left the presence of the king. In this manner David saved himself twice from the murderous assaults of Saul.

The more Saul brooded over the preference of David, the more dispondened he grew and the more did he hate him ; he banished him from court and gave him command over thousand men, thinking by sending him into war against the Philistines he would sooner or latter, hear of his loss, but the Lord was with David and he was successful in all his undertakings.

Seeing this, Saul promised to give him his oldest daughter, Merab, in matrimony, should he prove himself very valiant, always hoping, that in his adventurous skirmishes David would be killed. When now the time arrived, that Saul's word ought to be fulfilled, Merab was given in wed-lock to Adriel, the Mecholatite.

Saul's younger daughter, Michal, loved David and the king made his servant tell him, that, in case he should slay one hundred Philistines, he would receive Michal as his wife. David, with his men, managed to slay two hundred Philistines, after which the king gave him Michal according to his promise.

Meanwhile David had not alone gained the friendship of Jonathan and the love of Michal, his wife, he was also liked very much by all that knew him ; all this combined made the king fear him and he was bent upon killing him. Although Jonathan tried to appease his father he succeeded but for a little while ; when David once was playing the king again tried to kill him with his lance, whereupon David fled into his house.

Saul now ordered to surround the house, so that his men could siege upon David in the morning and kill him; but Michal contrived means to save her husband, who fled to Ramah, where he sought refuge in the house of the aged prophet Samuel, who went with him to Nayoth.

When Saul learnt the whereabouts of David, he sent messengers to Nayoth to bring him back, but these were so influenced by the prophet-scholars, that they joined them ; other messengers were sent with the same result.

Seeing his messengers not return Saul himself went to Ramah, but also he was taken in by the scholars, so much, that he is reported to have remained with them one day in a state of excitement, so that the people were asking : "Is Saul too among the prophets"?

CHAPTER VII.

JONATHAN'S FRIENDSHIP FOR DAVID.

David did not remain very long with Samuel, but left Nayoth and met his friend Jonathan. It was just the day before the new-moon. David wished Jonathan to excuse him by his father for not being present at table, he should say that he, David, went to Bethlehem to take part in the sacrifices offered there.

Before parting the two friends agreed upon a sign, by which Jonathan would let David know whether Saul was still bent on taking his life. David was to remain by the stone of Ezel ; here Jonathan would

come with his boy and shoot off three arrows and send the boy to find them. Should he say to the young man, the arrows are on this side of thee, then shall it be known, that Saul was well disposed towards David ; but should he say unto the young men ; the arrows are beyond thee, then shall it be known that Saul wished to do him evil and he should look for safe-keepers.

On the new-moon day at table, Saul missed his musician David and upon making inquiry was told by his son Jonathan, that he had asked for permission to go home; he then plead for his friend, but the king became so excited and enraged, that he threw his spear towards his son, who left the table in haste.

Jonathan knowing, that his father had now in all earnest resolved to have David killed, thought upon means, to save his friend. He went with his young man, to the place agreed the day previous, and being near the place of concealment of David, he shot off three arrows, then told his man to find them. When the man came near the place, where the arrows were, he called to him : “the arrow lieth beyond thee.”

As this was the sign that David was in danger, Jonathan took his arms, gave them to his young man and sent him home. The young man gone, David came out of his hiding place and knowing, that the king had resolved to do him harm, he embraced his friend Jonathan and both wept.

The two friends had to separate and did so in tears and amid a deep sorrow. Jonathan said : “Go in peace ; what we have sworn, both of us in the name of the Lord saying : The Lord shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever, (shall be kept”).

CHAPTER VIII.

DAVID'S FURTHER FLIGHT BEFORE SAUL.

David now knew by his friend Jonathan, that, if Saul would capture him, he should undoubtedly be killed, he therefore sought for a secure place of concealment.

He was without weapons and had not tasted any food for some time, when he came to Nod, where Achimelech, the priest was administering Here he pretended that the king had sent him on a secret mission, and

requested some bread and weapons. Nothing being on hand but the hallowed bread, five of them were given to David and also the sword of Goliath, which was hung up there.

All these proceedings were witnessed by Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen of Saul, who just then happened to be at Nob.

David, after being provided with provisions and a good weapon fled from there to Achish, the king of Gath; but being recognized by the servants of the king and fearful, lest they would deliver him up to Saul, he pretended to be insane and was left to depart from thence.

From there David fled into the cave "Adullam". where his parents and brothers came to him also for safely. At the same time all those that were dissatisfied with Saul's government came to David, so that he found himself at the head of 400 men.

Not wishing his father or mother to be exposed to the hardships and trials, which he saw in store for himself, David brought them to Mizbeh of Moab, requesting the king to let them reside there, saying: "Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, go forth with you, until I can know what God will do for me." The king granted the request and David's parents remained with Moab.

Now, although Samuel had retired from public life, it is not at all probable that he, who had anointed David, was paying no heed to the transaction of the government; he no doubt had always an eye upon David and by his scholars was agitating the people in his favor. One of those, called the prophet Gad, came to David, advising him to leave his strong-hold and go to the possessions of Jehudah. This David heeded and accordingly he removed into the forest of Chereth in Jehudah.

Saul must have had an idea, that David was spoken of as the future king of Israel, because he is reported to holding court in Gibah, where he reproached his servants for conspiring against him and sitting with David; stating, that even his son had made a covenant with the son of Jesse, and none of all his men would inform against David.

Here Doeg, the Edomite told the king what he had seen in Nob, that Achimelech, the son of Achitub, the priest had given him the hallowed bread and also the sword of Goliath.

Achimelech was sent for, he came accompanied by his family and all the priests of Nob. Saul asked why he had assisted David, the priest defended himself saying, that he would not refuse anything to

the son-in-law of the king, who stood so high in honors ; of any thing to the contrary he know nothing.

The king would not listen to this defence and ordered his men to slay the priest, but none of them would lay hands upon them. Then Saul turned towards Doeg, the Edomite and ordered him to obey the order, as given before, and Doeg fell upon the priests and massacred eighty-five of them ; Achimelech and all his friends and relatives, only one son of the priest, Ebyathar, escaped and fled to David, to whom he told all that had transpired.

Now it was told to David, that the Philistines were fighting against Ke'ilah and were plundering the threshing-floors ; whereupon he marched against the Philistines and smote them, thus saving the city.

When Saul heard, that David was in the city he rejoiced and said ; "God hath delivered him into my hands ; for he is shut in, by entering into a town, that hath gates and bars.

Saul collected his army to besiege the city, but David with about six hundred men left and wandered into the wilderness of Ziph, where he abode in strongholds and upon the mountain. Hearing this Saul discontinued the siege and instituted a rigid search after David "but God delivered him not into his hand."

CHAPTER IX.

SAUL IN THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH. DAVID'S GENEROSITY. DEATH OF SAMUEL.

In the wilderness of Ziph the two friends, Jonathan and David, met again and renewed their friendship. Here Jonathan not alone showed, that he knew, that David would be king, but was satisfied to be the first in the state after him : he also says, that Saul knew it.

The Ziphites came to Saul to Gib'ah, informing the king, that David was abiding in their mountains and promising to assist the king in his capture. These were sent home with the blessing of Saul, who told them to remark well the lurking-places, where David usually hid and let him know the same, when he comes, "that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Jehudah."

Arriving in the wilderness of Ziph with his men, Saul learned, that

David had gone down the rock into the wilderness of Maon, he followed and had nigh surrounded him and his men when a messenger arrived urging the king to return in haste, because the Philistines had fallen into the land. Hearing this, Saul, left David, to fight with the Philistines. The place therefore was called "Selabam-machaloketh" the rock of divisions.

When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines he selected three thousand men of Israel and followed David unto the strong-holds of Engedi upon the rock of the wild goats.

David and his men hid in the lower end of a cave, when Saul alone entered the same cave to sit down. The men of David rejoiced at that, deeming it a good opportunity to make an end of their trials, by killing Saul, who now was at the mercy of them, but David would not listen to it, he would not lay his hands upon the anointed of the Lord; but he went, and unperceived by Saul, cut off a piece of the royal mantle.

When Saul had left the cave to join his men, David came after him and holding the piece of the mantle, which he had cut off, in his hand bowing down respectfully, asked, why he thus pursueth him, who does not in the least feel evil disposed towards him and to prove this, the king's life was in his hand this day, but he would not dare to lay hands upon the anointed of the Lord.

Hearing this, Saul's heart softened and he wept, saying: "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast done for me only what is good, whereas I have rewarded thee only with what is evil. And now, behold, I know that thou wilt surely become king, and that the kingdom of Israel will stand firmly in thy hand. And now swear unto me by the Lord, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and thou wilt not destroy my name out of my fathers house."

"And David swore unto Saul; and Saul went to his house; but David and his men went up into the strong-hold."

At about this time Samuel died at Ramah and all Israel assembled to lament over and bury him in his sepulchre at Ramah.

CHAPTER X.

NABAL AND ABIGAYIL.

After the treaty agreed upon between Saul and David, the latter went with his men into the wilderness of Paran. David knew but too well, that the word of Saul would not be considered by him, as binding the moment the evil spirit came over him again, and he therefore remained in his safe quarters even after the same was concluded.

It is to be supposed, that in order to provide for his men, David guarded the flocks of the shepherds of the surrounding inhabitants from all harm, by the enemy or wild beast and asked as a reward to vendre for himself and men.

Now Nabal, a very rich man, in the possession of three thousand sheep and thousand goats, who carried on a business in Carmel was very penurious and bad, but his wife Abigayil, was just the contrary of her husband.

The herdsmen of Nabal received many favors at the hands of Davids men, and when he went to shear his sheep in Carmel, David sent some of his men there with the salutation of peace, requesting him to give them some provisions, but Nabal not alone refused this request, but also made use of insulting language against David and his men.

When that report was brought to David, he ordered his men to equip; with four-hundred of them he marched forth to chastise Nabal for his insulting language.

Meanwhile Abigayil was told what had transpired, by one of the herdsmen, who stated at the same time, that they were well taken care by the men of David. She at once, apprehending the revenge of the abused men, ordered a goodly amount of provision to be loaded upon animals and sent them onward to the strong-hold of David, telling the drivers, that, when they meet with Davids men, they should state that she was coming behind.

On the road Abigayil met David and dismounting, she begged him to forgive her husband for his wrongs, admitting, that he acted badly and entreated him to accept the presents she had prepared.

David gave the counter orders to please the fair Abigayil and returned to his stronghold. When Abigayil came home she found her husband engaged in feasting and drinking, and in no mood to listen to

her adventure ; so she waited until the next day, when she told him of her doings. He was so astounded, that "his heart died within him, and he became as a stone." Ten days he suffered thus and then died.

David, on hearing this and knowing that his wife Michal was given to Palti, son of Layish out of Gallim in wed-lock, sent messengers to Abigayil to propose himself as her husband. She consented and soon after came to him and he took her as his wife.

CHAPTER XI.

DAVID IN THE CAMP OF SAUL. DAVID MOVES TO THE PHILISTINES.

Saul soon forgot the generosity shown him by David, and when the Ziphites informed him, that David was hiding on the hill of Chachilah, before the desert, he selected three thousand men to captivate him.

David learning this, remained in the desert, but Saul put up his camp on the hill. In the night, when all were asleep, David and Abishai, son of Zeruyah came into the Israelitish camp and cautiously came up to the tent of the king. There he lay asleep and his watch around him, all asleep ; the spear of the king was stuck in the ground by his head.

Abishai asked permission of David to use the spear of Saul and kill him, which David would not permit it, but ordered him to take the spear and the cruise of water that was standing there and with them to depart.

The coming and going of David and Abishai was never noticed by any of Saul's men. When David had reached the top of a hill opposite the camp he called over to Abner, the captain of Saul, rebuking him for so grossly neglecting his office to sleep, instead of watching over the king.

Saul, awakened, heard the voice of David, who was speaking harsh with his captain, and on being told, that again the king's life was in his hands in the midst of his men, to prove which he was shown the spear and cruise of water, which he had taken, he then said ; "I have

sinned ; return, my son David ; for I will not do thee harm any more, for the cause, that my life was precious in thy eyes this day ; behold, I have acted foolishly and have erred exceedingly much.”

The spear and cruise were sent over by a man and Saul left for home.

David having no confidence in the promises made by Saul and wishing to avoid the devastations of the territory of Israel, which was always done by the pursuit of him, now resolved to place himself and men beyond a possible reach of Saul, and therefore passed over to Achish, king of Gath, the Philistine.

David and his six hundred men, with all their families, lived in Gad but having requested the king to assign unto him and followers some country-town to reside, Ziklag was given to him. By this movement on the part of David the policy of Saul was changed, he did no more search for him.

David remained in Ziklag full one year and four months, he invaded in that time the Geshurites, the Gizrites and Amalekites ; and made always rich spoils, but Achish knew nothing of it and thought David to be a good servant to the Philistines.

CHAPTER XII.

ZIKLAG IS BURNT. DAVID'S REVENGE. DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

The Philistines now resolved to a war against Israel, and the various kings came to the place of gathering with their hundreds and thousands and finally Achish arrived with his men accompanied by David and his followers.

The lords of the Philistines upon seeing David, held a council of war and resolved to advise Achish to let David depart to the place, he had assigned unto him, because they did not doubt, but that David would in the approaching battle either remain neutral or site with Israel. They said : “Is not this the man of whom they sang one to an other in the dances saying : Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.

Achish, being in the minority, had to submit to the council and gave ordes to David to go to Ziklag, but before taking leave of him he yet testified, that he had not found any reason to believe that he was treacherously disposed against him.

When at the end of three days David and his men arrived in view of Ziklag, they were maddened with sorrow on seeing the city burnt and all what was left therein, their wives and children and all they had, taken and carried off. Also the wives of David Abigayil and Achinoam were taken captives.

The people were so embittered against David, for leaving the city without guard, that they spoke of stoning him. With four hundred men, two hundred were too weary to follow their leader, David crossed the brook of Bessor in pursuit of the sneaking enemy.

Soon, the pursuing party met an exhausted man, an Egyptian, whom they brought to David ; who gave him some refreshments, after which he was interrogated whether he knew something about the party, that burnt Ziklag and it was ascertained that he was servant to an Amalekite, who was with the marauding band, who forsook him, when he became sick.

David made the man show him the way to the camp of the Amalekites. Arrived in view of it, he saw them spread all over the country eating, drinking and making merry on account of the rich spoil they had taken in the territory of Israel and Philistia

Improving the opportunity David fell upon them with his men and smote them from the twilight of the eve until the setting of the sun on the next day so that only four hundred of the marauders escaped upon camels ; all the rest were slain and the spoil they had taken was re-captured.

David returned now to Ziklag with his own wives and those of his men and all that had been taken.

Meanwhile the war between the Philistines and the Israelites was in full force. Saul, feeling himself bereft of God and forsaken by the prophets, became discouraged and of depressed spirit, and although fighting valiantly on the side of his three sons he found himself, overwhelmed by the Philistines and when he saw Jonathan and his other two sons fall, the battle lost, and himself surrounded by the enemy, he requested his sword bearer, to kill him, but being not obeyed, he committed suicide by plunging in his own sword.

On the other day the Philistines went over the battle-field to collect the garments and valuables of the slain ; on finding Saul and his sons on mount Gilboa, they cut off his head, stripped him of his armor and sent all over Philistia to publish the news in the houses of their idols.

The bodies of the slain king and his sons, the Philistines fastened to the walls of Beth-shan and his armor, they placed in the house of Ashtaroth.

When the valiant men of Yabesh-gilead heard, what had been done with the remains of the king and his sons, they marched all the night until they reached Beth-shan ; they took down the bodies of Saul and his sons, brought them to Yabesh, there burnt them, buried the bones under a tamarisk-tree in Yabesh and mourned seven days.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAVID MOURNS FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN.

2930 A. M. 1058. B. C.

David had returned to Ziklag but three days, when a man came to him exhausted and with his garments torn, bringing the news of the lost battle and of the death of Saul and his sons.

David, not crediting the messenger asked how he came to know all that and was answered : “ I happened entirely by chance to be on mount Gilboa, when, behold there was Saul leaning upon his spear ; and lo the chariots and horsemen had overtaken him. And he turned around, and he saw me and called upon me. And I said, Here am I. And he said unto me, Who art thou ? And I answered him, An Amalekite am I. And he said unto me, Place thyself, I pray thee. by me, slay me ; for a mortal tremour hath seized on me, although my life is yet whole in me. So I placed myself by him and slew him, because I was sure he could not live after his fall ; and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them unto my lord hither.”

Upon hearing this sad tale David rent his garment and he and all his men fasted that same day and lamented over the loss of Saul and Jonathan and the men of Israel that were slain.

The messenger David ordered to be executed, because he had laid his hands upon the anointed of the Lord.

And David spoke the following obituary over Saul and Jonathan :
“O beauty of Israel! upon the high places slain: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, that the daughters of the Philistines may not be glad, that the daughters of the uncircumcised may not rejoice. O mountain of Gilboa, no dew nor rain be upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty was stained, the shield of Saul, as though it had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned never back, and the sword of Saul never returned empty. Saul and Jonathan, the beloved and the dear in their lives, were even in their death not divided; more than eagles were they swift, more than lions were they strong. O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with beautiful dresses, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel, How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, on the high places slain. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very dear hast thou been unto me; wonderful was thy love for me, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and lost the instruments of war”!

CHAPTER XIV.

DAVID ELECTED KING OVER JEHUDAH. WAR WITH ISBOSHETH AND HIS CAPTAIN ABNER.

David now moved with his two wives Achinoam and Abigayil to Hebron. Here the men of Judah came and anointed him king over the house of Judah.

David, being told, that the men of Yabesh-gilead have shown kindness to Saul and Jonathan and buried their remains, sent messengers to them saying: “Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have done this kindness unto your lord, unto Saul, and have buried him. And now may the Lord deal with you in kindness and truth; and as for me also, I will requite you this good deed, because ye have done this thing.

And now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant men: for your lord Saul is dead; and also me have the house of Judah anointed as king over them.”

But Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth Saul's son, brought him to Meehanayim and proclaimed him king over Israel, when he was forty years old.

The men of the two rival kings met at Gibeon and in a battle those of Ish-bosheth were slain; but Asahel, brother of Joab, son of Zeruyah, captain of Davids hosts, was slain in single combat by Abner, who was forced to retreat again to Meehanayim.

Soon Ish-bosheth lost the services of Abner, who turned over to David, having had a quarrel with his lord, but David would not make an alliance with him, unless he brings unto him again his wife Michal, daughter of Saul. To this condition Abner agreed, but when the same was fulfilled and Abner just in the act of influencing all Israel to rally under the flags of David Joab assassinated Abner, for having killed his brother Abner in single combat.

Abner was buried in Hebron and David sincerely mourned the loss of a valiant man and a most useful ally,

CHAPTER XV.

ISH-BOSHETH DEAD; DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL. 2937 A. M. 1051 B. C.

Ish-bosheth reigned but two years, when he was assassinated at noon-day, while asleep, by the sons of Rominon, the Beerothite, Rachab and Baanah, who took the head of the murdered man, bringing the same to David at Hebron, saying: that his enemy being dead now, he could reign over all Israel.

David was very wroth at the men, gave orders for their execution and buried the head of Ish-bosheth at Hebron and mourned over him.

Although the rival king was dead, David was not yet proclaimed king over all Israel; his party gained strength day by day, but it took yet about five years before all Israel was united under one king.

During the seven years and six months, that David was king over Judah at Hebron, there were born unto him : Amnon, Kilab, Abshalom, Adoniyah, Shephatyah and Yithream, six sons.

After the seven years, all the tribes of Israel assembled to David at Hebron and there made a covenant with and anointed him king over all Israel.

Being now firmly established as king, David made war with the Jebusites, who dwelt in Jerusalem and conquered the stronghold of Zion, where he afterwards built his house and called the place : "The city of David."

With Hiram, king of Tyre, David effected a covenant. Hiram agreed to send to David cedar-trees ; carpenters and stone-masons to build the king's houses and to enlarge the city.

The Lord was with David, he was successful in all his undertakings ; his kingdom was firmly established upon the good will of all Israel. His family increased ; more sons and daughters were born unto him.

The Philistines on hearing that Israel again was united under one king, came forth to war with them. They spread in the valley of Rephaim. David came to oppose them and smote the entire Philistine force and said : "The Lord had broken down my enemies before me, as a breach (is made by) water ; wherefore he called the place Ba'al-Pe-razim."

The idols which were left in the camp and captured by David's men, were burnt. But the Philistines reenforced came again in the valley of Rephaim and again David smote them, this time signally, because he drove them from Geba to Gezer,

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ARK IS BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM. NATHAN, THE
PROPHET. WAR WITH THE ABORIGINES.
DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH.

David thought it now about time to give the ark of God a final resting place. In order to do this he assembled the chosen men of Israel,

thirty thousand, and with them he went to Ba'ale-yehudah to the house of Abinadab, where the ark was yet standing and conveyed it upon a new wagon towards the city of David. Upon the way one of the guardsmen, Uzzah, son of Abinadab died accidentally, after touching the ark and David called the place Perez - uzzah.

This accident caused a stop on the road and the ark was placed into the house of Obed - edom the Gittite. But soon all necessary preparations were concluded and three months after the death of Uzzah, the Ark was taken to the city of David, amid songs, dances, sacrifices and great rejoicings.

David, disliked the idea, of living in a house, whereas the ark, the testimony of the covenant between God and Israel; should be located in a tent. To his views the national sanctuary should first be permanently located in a goodly house, before he ought to have his palace.

Communing these ideas to Nathan, the prophet, David was advised to withhold from building a house of God for locating the tabernacle or ark, because said he, in the name of God: "When thy days will be completed, and thou wilt sleep with thy fathers, then will I set up thy seed after thee, who shall proceed out of thy body, and I will establish his kingdom. He it is that shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I too will be to him as a father, and he shall indeed be to me as a son."

Obedying this advise David desisted from his plans, went in, to the ark of God and prayed long and devoutly for the kindness and love shown him and his house by a kind Providence.

After the Philistines and the Moabites were made tributary to Israel, David opposed Hadadezer, king of Zobah, who wished to restore his power on the Euphrates, and slew him, capturing many chariots; also the Syrians, who came to assist Hadad - ezer, were slain, made tributary to Israel and a garrison placed to Damascus.

To'i, king of Chamoth, who was in a state of dependence to Hadad - ezer, when he heard of the victories achieved by David over his enemy, sent his son Yoram to David bearing rich presents and congratulating him on his successful feats.

Also the South of the territory of Israel, Edom, was made tributary. By these victories David acquired a great name, not alone as a warrior, but also as a king "who was just and right unto all his people."

The court of Jerusalem consisted of : “Joab, son of Zeruyah, captain of the army, Jehoshaphat, son of Achilud, recorder, Zadok, son of Achitub and Achimelech, son of Ebyathar, priests, Sarayah, scribe, Benayahu, son of Yehoyada was over both the Kerethites and the Pelethites and the sons of the king who were officers of state.”

In all his happy days David never forgot the pledge given to Saul, that he would show kindness to his seed and when he heard of an old servant of Saul, Ziba, that Jonathan had left a son, who was lamed by a fall, he took him to his court and restored unto him all the possessions of his father and grand - father. Mephibosheth, this was the son of Jonathan, henceforth dwelt in Jerusalem at the court and was there considered as the son of the king.

Soon thereafter a new war broke out, because David's ambassadors, whom he sent to the king of Ammon, to comfort him, because his father died, were insulted and sent back. David collected his armies and slew Ammon and the Syrians, who came to assist the Ammonites.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAVID COMMITS A GREAT SIN. HE REPENTS.

David committed a great sin by managing it, so that Uriyah came to his death in a war, after which he married Bath-sheba the formers wife.

This deed displeased all who heard it. Nathan, the prophet, came to David speaking thus : “Two men were once in one city, the one rich, the other poor. The rich man had flocks and herds in great abundance. But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe, which he had bought; and he nourished it, and it grew up with him and with his children together ; of his bread it used to eat, and out of his cup it used to drink, and in his bosom it used to lie, and it was to him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man ; and he felt compunctive to take from his own flock and from his own herds to dress for the wayfarer that was come to him ; but he took the ewe of the poor man, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.”

On hearing this, David grew exceedingly angry and he said to Nathan : “As the Lord liveth, surely the man that had done this deserv-

eth to die ; and the ewe he shall pay fourfold, for punishment, that he hath done this thing, and because he had no compassion. ”

Hereupon Nathan turned to David, saying : “THOU ART THE MAN!” David being forcibly struck with the magnitude of the crime, answered submissively : “I have sinned against the Lord !”

The child born unto David by Bath - sheba became sick, and for seven days, as long as the sickness of the child lasted, David refused to be comforted; he would often lay prostrate on the ground, in silent devotion before the Lord, so that on the seventh day, when the child died, the servants were at a loss, how to let him know ; but hearing them whisper together, he made inquiry concerning the child and on being told of its death, “he rose up from the earth, and washed and anointed himself and changed his garments, and went into the house of the Eternal and prostrated himself ; and then he came to his own house, and asked that they should set food before him and he ate.”

The servants thought this a strange conduct of their lord and asked an explanation, upon which he made answer : “While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept ; because I said, who knoweth, but that the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live. But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast then ! can I restore him again ? “I AM GOING TO HIM ; BUT HE WILL NOT RETURN TO ME.”

Another son was born unto David by Bath - sheba, whom he named Solomon ; the king gave him in charge of Nathan the prophet, whom he made his governor. Solomon was named by Nathan “Yedidiyah beloved by God.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

ABSHALOM'S CONSPIRACY AGAINST DAVID.

Amnon, one of the numerous sons of David, grossly insulted Thamar, his step-sister, born to David by the mother of Abshalom. The king was exceedingly angry at it and Abshalom hated Amnon for the sake of his sister.

For two years Abshalom did not speak to Amnon, but in no other way did he betray his hatred; but after the two years were past he kept a sheep - shearing upon his estate, to which all the sons of David were

invited and in attendance ; he caused Amnon to be assassinated by his servants and they fled to Talmai, king of Geshur, where he remained banished from court for three years. Through Joabs interference he was recalled after that time.

Abshalom, being of prepossessing appearance, was ambitious and thought upon means, to succeed his father on the throne of Israel; to gain favor by the people, he went daily to the gates of the city, where the people came in, who had some dealings with the officers, judges etc. To them he would say, that they ask in vain for justice by the officers of the king and intimating, that if he would be the ruler, things would be changed to the advantage of the people.

By such cunning contrivances, Abshalom became very popular and he could count upon many, who were supporting his claim upon the throne of his father.

When Abshalom saw that he was well supported and could enter upon his plans, he asked leave of absence from his father to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow, which he had vowed when in Geshur. David, consenting, said : "Go in peace."

Abshalom went to Hebron, followed by two hundred invited guests, who did not know anything of the conspiracy. To the tribes he had secretly sent emissaries saying, : "When ye hear the sound of the cornet, then shall ye say : Abshalom is become king at Hebron."

When done sacrificing, the conspirator sent to Achithophel the Gilonite, one of the counsellors of David and the two united upon plans to overthrow the government and to place Abshalom on the throne.

The popularity of Abshalom and Achithophel proved to be effective; the conspiracy increased in dimensions : " the people increased continually with Abshalom."

The news was brought to David, that : "the heart of the men of Israel is turned after Abshalom." Being desirous of avoiding bloodshed and the besieging of the city, David prepared for flight and with his servants, some officers and six hundred men, that followed him from Gath, he left the city amid the lamentations of the inhabitants.

Also the priests Zadok and Ebyather, with all the train of Levites bearing the ark of God, left the city, but David would not admit it and he sent the ark back to the city of David, saying : "If I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, and show me

both, it and his dwelling. But if he should thus say, I have no delight in thee : here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good in his eyes.”

An agreement was made between David and Zadok, that the ark should be carried back and the priests remain with it, but that Zadok's sons should bring him the news of all that transpired to the desert, where he would tarry.

David and his train of followers ascended mount Olive weeping, with covered heads and barefoot.

When David was told, that his own counsellor Achithophel was with Abshalom he prayed : “I pray thee, turn into foolishness the counsel of Achithophel, O Lord.”

When David had arrived on the top of the mountain and had made an end of worshipping the Lord, Chushai, the Arkite, came to meet him with his garments torn and earth upon his head, as a token of grief ; he would follow his king ; but David prevailed upon him to return to the city and show himself submissive and obedient unto Abshalom ; thus he would be better able to assist his king, by defeating the counsel of Achithophel ; for any help, David recommended him to Zadok, Ebya-ther and their sons.

Chushai, David's friend, returned to the city in time to see Abshalom enter, and take possession of the palace of his father.

David on going on, was met by Ziba, the keeper of Mephibosheth's house, who carried upon asses some refreshments for the king and his men. When asked, where his master was, he answered, that Mephibosheth was at Jerusalem, meditating upon, that : “ to-day will the house of Israel restore unto me the kingdom of my father.”

Hearing this the king grew angry at Mephibosheth, to whom he had shown nothing but kindness and said : “Behold thine shall be all that pertaineth unto Mephibosheth.” And Ziba said : “I prostrate myself ; let me but find grace in thy eyes, my Lord, o king.”

When David came as far as Bachurim, Shim'i out of the family of Saul came forth cursing, the king and throwing stones at him. When the king's followers showed signs of punishing the cowardly act, David forbade it saying : “So let him curse ; because the Lord had said unto him: Curse David Behold, my son, who had come forth out of my own body, seeketh my life ; how much more this Benjamite ? let him alone

and let him curse, for the Lord had told it to him. Perhaps the Lord will look upon my affliction, and the Lord will require me good instead of his cursing this day.”

Weary and exhausted David and his men arrived in the wilderness, where they rested and refreshed themselves.

CHAPTER XIX.

ABSHALOM'S DEATH.

Abshalom had come to the city with Achithophel, his counsellor; here he was met by Chushai, the Arkite, who greeted him with the words : “Long live the king ;” and was received by the conspirator as one of his counsellors.

The king's advisers were called together to devise plans how to overcome David's party. Achithophel was in favor of taking twelve thousand men, pursue David and smite his men, while they were yet weary and exhausted.

This advice was good and would have proved fatal to David, but for the interference of Chushai.

Achithophel's plan was agreeable to all, but when it came to Chushai's turn to give his opinion, he openly disapproved the same, giving the following reasons: that David was a mighty man of war and all his followers were well trained and fierce soldiers and would be prepared for all events; as for David himself he would be cunning enough not to remain amid the camps, but seek refuge in one of the strongholds or caves.

His advice was to collect the whole israelitish forces and with them to smite David and his men in an open battle, the result would be favorable.

Chushai's plan was adopted, whereupon Achithophel became so indignant at the short-sightedness of the new king and his advisers, that he left the court, went home, advised his house and committed suicide.

Chushai sent word to Zadok to send one of his sons to David, stating all what he had done, advising him to at once cross the Jordan. This counsel was received and executed. Before dawn of day, David and all his men had crossed the river.

David came with his men to Machanayim, where he was furnished with provisions and the necessary utensils by Shobi, son of Nachash, Machir, son of Amuniel and Barzilla the Gil'adite.

David now mustered his men, divided them into three divisions, commanded by Joab, Abishai and Ittai; for Abshalom with his army also had crossed the Jordan and a battle was imminent.

David was persuaded to remain inactive, abiding the result. When he took leave of his men, he commanded their resp. leaders in the hearing of all the people, saying: "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, with Abshalom."

The ensuing battle was fierce and thousands fell, but finally Abshalom's army was slain and he himself fled, riding upon a mule; and when coming under the thick boughs of a great oak, his luxurient growth of hair became entangled in the boughs and he thus was hanging, and the mule passed on. He was seen there by a man, who brought the news to Joab, who went there and with his armor-bearers killed the usurper threw his body into a pit and heaped stones upon him.

As soon as Abshalom was dead, Joab gave the signal to restrain his men from pursuing the late enemy.

When the news of the glorious victory over the usurper's army was brought to David, it was his first question: "Is the young man Abshalom safe?" Hearing of his death, the king was greatly moved and lamented: "O my son Abshalom, my son, my son Abshalom! who would grant, that I would have died in thy stead. O Abshalom, my son, my son!"

Thus the day of victory was changed in a day of lamentation and the people entered their camp as though they were ashamed; it was only on the interference of Joab, that the king did admit the army to pass before him.

The men, that had supported Abshalom, returned to their tents after the death of their leader, and the conspiracy was ended.

CHAPTER XX.

DAVID RETURNS TO JERUSALEM.

The conspiracy broken, David made all preparations to return to Jerusalem. Through Zadok and Ebyather, the priests, the news soon spread all over and the men of Judah and Israel came to meet their legitimate king at Gilgal.

Amasa, the late captain of Abshaloms men, also came to David and was installed as captain in the place of Joab. Also Shim'i, who had cursed and thrown stones at him, came and prostrating himself, asked forgiveness, and pardon was granted to him.

Also Mephibosheth came in a sad appearance, for he had mourned all the time David had gone. Being asked where he had remained all this time, he stated, that the keeper of his house, Zeba, had grossly deceived him; he had ordered his mules to be saddled to bring him to David, because he could not walk on account of his lameness, but the servant went off leaving him behind.

David, as we have told, had given all the possessions of Mephibosheth to Zeba; he now restored his inheritance to him, leaving to the deceitful servant only a portion.

Also Barzilla, a man of nigh eighty years, came to meet his king with the salutation of peace, and because David could not persuade him to remain with him at court, he took from that day Kiniham, Barzilla's son, and of him he made an Officer of State.

On the road, the men of Israel quarrelled with the men of Judah, because these had not waited for the men of Israel to lead the king back; high words passed between the two angry parties and a Benjamite named Sheba, placing himself at the head of the Israelites, seceded from Judah.

The king, who meanwhile had returned to Jerusalem, sent Amassa to collect his faithful adherents within three days and march against the rebellious portion of the nation. But Amassa, not returning in the specified time, the king commissioned Joab and Abishai to subdue Sheba and his faction.

Joab and Abishai went out on their commission, and on meeting with Amassa, Joab killed him and went on in his pursuits. Sheba, who was soon forsaken by his followers, was killed, and thus the peace was restored.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADONIAH'S CONSPIRACY. SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

After the death of Sheba every thing returned to the regular order and David lived several years in peace and contentment at Jerusalem ; but when he became old he had to realize one more severe trial.

Adoniyah, a son of David by his wife Chaggith, exalted himself above his brethern and allied with Joab, and Ebyather : he claimed his right as successor to his father.

The pretender ordered a feast to which he invited his brethern, his followers and many of the officers and servants of David, and there he proclaimed himself king of Israel.

Now, Nathan, the prophet and Zadok the priest, being greatly in favor of Solomon being the successor to David, did not join the party of Adoniyah, but remained at home; when now the latter had been proclaimed as king, they went in to David, asking whether it was by his consent, that Adoniyah had been proclaimed king, and if so, why they, trustworthy servants of the king, were refused to be admitted into confidence.

Now David had promised Bath-sheba, that her son Solomon should be king after him and being now advised of Adoniyah's doings, he ordered his officers and servants to assemble, to lead his son Solomon upon a mule to the brook Gichon and there the priests should anoint him king of Israel, successor to his father David.

The orders of the aged king were executed. Solomon was anointed king by order of his father, trumpets were blown and great shouts proclaimed that Solomon was the king of Israel.

When Adoniyah and his invited guests heard this, they lost all courage, separated and went every one to his house. Adoniyah himself was greatly alarmed and sought refuge by the Altar, which he would not leave, until Solomon would swear to save his life ; but was told :

“If he will become a worthy man, there shall not a hair of his fall to the earth, but if any wrong shall be found on him, then shall he die.”

Adoniah came in the presence of the new king, bowed down before him and was sent to his house in peace.

CHAPTER XXII.

DAVID'S DEATH. HIS ADVISE TO SOLOMON

5970. A. M. 1018. B. C.

David was seventy years old, he had reigned in Hebron over Judah seven years and in Jerusalem over all Israel thirty - three years ; he had abdicated in favor of his son Solomon and feeling, that his end was nigh, he gave to his successor his parting admonition.

“I am going the way of all the earth ; but be thou strong, and become a man. And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses ; in order that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and withersoever thou turnest thyself ; In order that the Lord may fulfill his word which he hath spoken concerning me, saying : If thy children take heed to their way to walk before me in truth, with all their heart and with all their soul there shall never fail thee, said he, a man on the throne of Israel.”

At the close of his remarks, David recommended Solomon to remember Joab, who has made himself guilty of assassinating Abner and Amassa and to give him according to his merits ; also Shim'i who insulted him grossly, when he fled before Abshalom, but at the same time he should show kindness to the posterity of Baarzilai, who was so kind to him on that momentous occasion.

David died and was buried by Solomon in the city of David.

David left Solomon a powerful empire ; the political position of the nation was perfected, the aborigines were subdued and even some neighboring powerful tribes were made tributary to the Israelites. Besides he had done much towards the glorification of the Lord ; the religious service was exalted, he had written poems, psalms and songs and had arranged singers and musicians to execute the songs.

Solomon entered upon his royal functions and executed the recom-mandations of his father. Joab, the assassinator of Abner and Amassa was killed and Benayohn, son of Yehoyada, was placed in his stead captain of the army. Also Adoniyah was executed, because he had evil designs against the king. Shim'i was told to build himself a house in Jerusalem and by penalty of death not to leave the town; after three years two of Shim'i's male-servants ran off and he pursued them beyond the city; for this offence he was executed. Ebyathar, the priest, was banished, because he had sided with Adoniyah and Zadok took his place. As a place for his banishment Anathoth was appointed

CHAPTER XXIII.

SOLOMON'S DREAM. HIS WISDOM.

Solomon walked in the ways of his father David. At one time he went to Gib'on to sacrifice unto the Lord. Here he dreamt one night, that God appeared to him saying: "Ask what I shall give thee. Upon this he made answer: "Now, O Lord, my God, thou hast made thy servant king in the place of David, my father, and I am but a young lad; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people, which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, to discern between good and bad; for who would (otherwise) be able to judge this, thy great people." Upon this supplication he received the following answer: "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, and hast not asked for thyself riches, nor hast asked thy life of thy enemies; but hast asked for thyself discernment to understand (how to give) judgement; behold I have done according to thy word; lo, I have given thee a wise and a discerning heart; so that like unto thee there was none before thee, nor after thee shall ever arise like unto thee. And also what thou hast not asked have I given thee, both, riches and honors: so that like unto thee there shall not have been any one among the kings all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then will I lengthen thy days."

Solomon awoke in the morning, but this dream had made a deep impression upon his soul and he went to Jerusalem, where he entered

the sanctuary of the Lord, where he offered sacrifices and offerings and gave a feast to all his servants and friends.

Not long thereafter his wisdom was called into requisition, by being called upon to render judgement in a very complicated and difficult affair

Two women came before him with each a child, but one was dead, the other living. One of these women told the king, that both of them lived in one house, no stranger with them, that both had children, but in one night her companion suffocated her child by laying unconsciously upon it, and when she saw her infant dead, she slyly changed it with the living one; now she claimed the living child as her own. The other women retorted, saying : that the living child was hers and the dead one belonged to her companion.

No witness present to testify to the veracity of either, the complainant of the defendant, to render a judgement was a severe task to the young king; but he soon proved his discernment, the voice of nature must show him the true mother and he had only to devise means and ways how to arouse the sympathy of the true mother of the living child.

Solomon, in accordance to this wise calculation, gave the following decision : Not knowing, who of the two was the mother of the dead or of the living child, no witness present to testify in the matter, he ordered a sword to be procured and to cut the dead child in two, giving each one half and doing the same to the living child.

One woman agreed to this judgement, but the other pleaded for the living child, rather than cutting it in two she would prefer the other woman to keep it ; here spoke a mother's love and a mother's compassion and the king said : "Give her the living child, and do not slay it; she is its mother."

This decision confirmed Solomon a wise king and all Israel feared him "for they saw, that the wisdom of God was in him to exercise justice."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SOLOMON'S GREATNESS AND WISDOM. ALLIANCE
WITH HIRAM. PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING
THE TEMPLE.

Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms, from the Euphrates, to the land of the Philistines and to the boundary of Egypt. Tribute was paid him by all and he received presents from many ; they all served him during his Life. Peace was not broken ; the political prosperity of Judah and Israel united, had reached its climax under him.

Solomon is recorded as having spoken three thousand proverbs and composed one thousand and five songs ; he spoke equally well of the trees, from the Cedar-tree to the Hyssop, from the beast, the fowls, the reptiles and fishes. From far-off countries people came to hear him and to profit by his wise lessons.

Also Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to Solomon, congratulating him upon the ascension of the throne of David, with whom he always lived in friendship.

To these messengers Solomon proposed an alliance with Hiram. The Zidonians subjects of Hiram, were renowned for their skill in cutting timber. Solomon now proposed a treaty with Hiram on condition, that the Zidonians should could for him timber of cedar and fir, which he would use in building the temple of the Lord ; he would pay them the required wages and in return would execute any provision proposed by Hiram.

Hiram agreed to let his subjects cut the timber, to convey them by sea in floats to a place determined upon by Solomon, in return he would receive the food for his household.

The articles of this treaty were concluded and complied with, the Zidonians cut the timber and floated it to the place, assigned to them, and Solomon sent Hiram year by year twenty thousand kors of wheat and twenty kors of beaten oil. Thus the two kings made a covenant with each other and their friendship was never broken.

When thus the supply of wood was procured, Solomon ordered to quarry heavy stones, to lay the foundation of the temple. The builders of Solomon and Hiram and the Giblites (inhabitants of Gebal, or Byblus, in the northern part of Phenicia) cut and prepared both,

wood and stone, for the erection of the temple, which David already wished to build, but desisted from upon the advise of a prophet and left this task to Solomon, his successor upon the throne of Israel.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE. 2973 A. M. 1015. B. C.

In the four hundred and eighteenth year after the exodus from Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, in the second month, Zio, the foundation of the temple was laid and the work began.

As the work progressed, no hammer, no ax nor any iron tool was heard, because the stones were prepared in the quarry and the same was the case with the timber.

These are the dimensions of the temple as built and its arrangement: The main building was sixty yards long, twenty yards wide and thirty yards high. The inner walls were lined with cedar-wood and the floor was laid with fir. In front of the temple proper, in the east was a hall, twenty yards long (north to south) and ten yards broad (east to west). In front of the hall stood two gigantic pillars of copper, each twelve yards in circumference and eighteen yards high, with capitals thereon of five yards high of molten copper, both pillar and capitals were elaborately ornamented with checker-work. The pillar on the south side he named Yachin and the one on the north, Baag. From the hall a folding door let into the holy, forty yards long, twenty wide and thirty high. Here stood a golden altar, the altar of incense, ten golden chandeliers and ten golden tables, five of each on each side. The sanctum sanctorum or all-holy (debio) was separated from the holy by a wall, a curtain overhung the entrance. The all-holy was twenty yards long, wide and high. Here stood the ark of God, containing the two tables of stone, which Moses had deposited therein. The cover of the ark was ornamented with two Cherubines of oliaster-wood, overlaid with gold, each ten yards high. The wings of the Cherubines were each five yards wide, so that they touched each other and then spread to the walls. The floor of the holy and the holy of holies was overlaid with gold, and the walls covered with cedar-wood and gold, all of which was highly ornamented. The temple proper was surrounded by two great halls, the outer

was destined for the people, the inner for the priests. In the latter stood the great altar for sacrifices ; the molten sea, five yards high and thirty in circumference at the opening, resting upon twelve oxen of which three were looking to the east, three to the west, three to the south and three to the north ; besides ten lavers of copper, used for cleaning the sacrifices and utensiles. The whole was again surrounded by porches and galleries. The windows had been so constructed as to be wide on the outside, but narrow on the inside.

The building of the temple took seven years. The architect, that superintended the whole work, carpenters, masonry and ornamental, was Hiram, the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali.

In the eleventh year of Solomon's reign the building was finished in all its parts and Solomon deposited therein all the vessels of gold and silver, which his father David had dedicated to the service of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE. 2980 A. M. 1008 B. C.

When the work of building was completed, Solomon convoked the elders, the chiefs and officers and all the people to Jerusalem, to be present, when he was to convey the ark of God from the city of David, also called Zion, to its final resting place, into the temple, which he had erected to the glorification of the Lord.

In the seventh month, on the feast of that month, Succoth, all Israel had congregated together at Jerusalem. In the presence of all the people, the priests conveyed the ark and the moveable sanctuary, from the place where it rested till now, and all the emblems, utensiles and carried it into the temple, and the priests deposited the ark into the holy of the holies, debio, under the wings of the Cherubines. During all this time the king and the people sacrificed a great multitude of sacrifices unto the Lord.

The ark, being placed in its proper place, the king Solomon stood before the altar and with outstretched hands he made the following supplication :

“O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in the

heaven above, and on the earth beneath, thou, who keepest the covenant and the kindness for thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; who hast kept for thy servant David, my father, what thou hadst promised him, and thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. And now, O Lord, the God of Israel, keep for thy servant David, my father, what thou hast concerning him, saying: There shall never fail thee a man in my sight, who sitteth on the throne of Israel; if thy children but take heed to their way to walk before me, as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, I pray thee, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant, my father. For in truth will God then dwell on the earth? behold, the heavens and the heavens of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less then this house, that I have built! Yet wilt thou turn thy regard unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord, my God, to listen unto the entreaty and unto the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee this day. That thy eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place, of which thou hast said: my name shall be there, that thou mayest listen unto the prayer, which thy servant shall pray at this place. And listen thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they will pray at this place, and oh, do thou hear in heaven thy dwelling place; and hear, and forgive. What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man of all thy people Israel, when they shall be conscious every man of the plague of his own heart, and he then spread forth his hands toward this house: Then do thou hear in heaven, the place of thy dwelling, and forgive, and act, and give to every man in accordance with all his ways, as thou mayest know his heart; for thou, thyself alone, knowest the heart of all the children of men. In order, that they may fear thee all the days, that they live on the face of the land, which thou hast given unto our fathers. But also to the stranger, who is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far-off country for the sake of thy name; for they will hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy outstretched arm; when he will come and pray at this house: Mayest thou listen in heaven the place of thy dwelling to all that the stranger will call on thee for, in order that all the nations of

the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel, and that they may understand, that this house, which I have built, is called by thy name-”

When Solomon had made an end of this prayer and supplication, he arose and blessed all the congregation of Israel, saying : “Blessed be the Lord, who hath given rest unto his people Israel, in accordance with all, that he had spoken ; so that there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he spoke by the hand of Moses, his servant. The Lord, our God, be with us, as he was with our fathers ; oh, may he not leave us, nor forsake us ; that he may incline our heart unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes and his ordinances, which he commanded our fathers. And may these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord, our God, day and night, that he may maintain the cause of his servants and the cause of his people Israel in their daily requirements. In order, that all the nations of the earth may know, that the Lord is the true God, and none else. Let your heart therefore be entire with the Lord, our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.”

With this blessing, the supplication and the sacrifices as offered, the temple was dedicated to the service of the Lord. For seven days the festivities lasted, then followed the seven days of the feast of (Sukkoth), on the eight day the people were dismissed and they went home, rejoicing and happy over all the good things, which God had done to David and Solomon and by them to the people of Israel.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA VISITS THE KING. SOLOMON'S RICHES.

Solomon had not alone completed the temple, but also houses for his own use in the city and in the forest ; to all of them Hiram, king of Tyre, had supplied him with the requisite timber and gold, as much he desired ; in return Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee.

Solomon also built a ship in Ezyon-geber, which is near Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. He manned it with

seamen of Hiram's domains, and partly by his men. With this ship they sailed to Ophir and returned having a full cargo of gold.

The queen of Sheba (a domain of Arabia) had heard so much of the wisdom of Solomon, and the magnitude and splendor of his court, that she came to Jerusalem, with a great train of followers, and with rich presents, to see and converse with the king, whether the report was not a false one.

Solomon received his queen visitor with royal splendor, and entertained her with royal hospitality. After she had seen the order at court and the perfection of all arrangements, and when she had conversed with Solomon and knew by personal observation that he was as wise, as report stated, then she said: "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, who stand before thee continually, who hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath had delight in thee, to place thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loveth Israel forever, therefore hath he made thee king, to do justice and righteousness."

Solomon received her presents and gave her some in return, after which she left.

Gold was so plentifully in Solomon's time, that he had made two hundred shields of solid gold, and three hundred smaller ones also of solid gold, all of them were hung up in his palace; he also made a throne overlaid with gold, which latter must have been a work of wonderful skill. This throne stood upon six steps, on each step stood a lion, thus twelve lions on both sides of the steps leading to the throne proper. An artificial work like this has not been seen tofore.

The riches of Solomon must have been immense, because record says that in his days silver had no value, because of the plentitude of gold.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SOLOMON'S SIN. HIS ENEMIES. HIS DEATH.

Solomon intermarried with those nations of whom Moses had made mention, that Israel should not do so, because they would lead them astray from God. Besides the daughter of Pharaoh, of Egypt, he had wives of those nations.

When now in old age these foreign wives brought him to grant the introduction of their idol-worship; so it came to pass that the Ashteroth, the divinity of the Zidonians and Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites were worshipped, not secretly by his wives, but in his own presence.

Solomon even built a high place for Kemosh, the abomination of Moab, on the mount before Jerusalem, and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon. He not alone allowed his strange wives to worship their idols, but he facilitated their designs and designated the places, where it could take place.

When the news spread abroad that the great and wise Solomon was under the influence of his wives, one nation after another revolted against him; firstly it was the Edomite Hadad who troubled him in the south, and then Rezon became his adversary in the north.

Besides these enemies, Solomon had made himself one, by far more dangerous than they—the prophets, who saw behind the king the interest of the nation. These men, inspired with the great destiny of the nation, that by them the monotheistic idea should be spread, would rather give up and forsake the king, than giving up the idea. These men Solomon had made his adversaries, by forsaking the Lord and admitting idolatry in his Land.

One of these prophets, Achiyah, the Shilonite, on meeting with Jerobe'am, the son of Nebat, an Ephratite, a mighty man and a man of renown, promised to him, that he should become king over the tribes of Israel, because of the unworthiness of Solomon who permitted idolatry.

Jerobeam now openly revolted against Solomon, probably only in so much, as he protested against the idol-worship, and the king sought to kill him; but he fled to Egypt to the king Shisbak, where he remained until the death of Solomon.

After Solomon had reigned over Israel forty years, he died and was buried in the city of his father David. His son Rehobo'am was destined to succeed him upon the throne of Israel.

PERIOD IV.

PART II.

From the coronation of Rohoboam

TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE.

Comprising the books of: Kings I., Kings II., Amos, Joel,
Hosea, Isaiah, Michah, Nachum, Zephaniah, Habakuk
Jeremias, and Ezekiel.

From 3010 A. M. 978 B. C.

To 3402 A. M. 586 B. C.

A PERIOD OF 392 YEARS.



BIBLICAL HISTORY.

I.

CORONATION OF ROHOBOA'M. TEN TRIBES SECEDE. 3010 A. M. 978 B. C.

Rehobo'am destined by his father Solomon to succeed him upon the throne of Israel, went to Schechem, where all Israel came together to confirm his claims on the throne. Also Jerobe'am, who in Egypt had heard of the death of Solomon, came back and was present at the assemblage in Schechem.

The Israelites, before confirming Rehobo'am as king, waited upon him and said: "Thy father made our yoke hard; but do thou now make lighter the hard service of thy father, and his heavy yoke, which he put upon us, and we will serve thee." To this Rehobo'am declined to answer right away, but requested the people to call again in three days to hear his decision.

The king now took advice with the old counselors, who had served his father, and they advised him to promise the people to do according to their request and easen the burden and lighten the yoke. From this counsel the king turned towards the young men, that had grown up with him and consulted them. The result of this consultation was that they advised him to make the following answer to the request of the people: "My little finger is thicker than my fathers loins, and now, if my father hath burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will even add to your yoke; if my father hath chastised you with whips, then will I chastise you with scorpion-thorns."

On the third day, when the people came to hear the answer of the king and were thus received, because the king had adopted the advise of the young instead of the wholesome counsel of the old, they dissolved in open rebellion, saying: "What portion have we in David; nor have we an inheritance in the son of Jesse; to your tents O Israel: now see to thy own house, David!"

Rohoboam, on seeing, how matters turned to his great disadvantage, sent Adoram, who was over the tribute, to recall the seceding party, probably to retract his rash and foolish answer; but all Israel “stoned him with stones, that he died.” Seeing this, the king in haste, mounted his chariôt and fled to Jerusalem.

Only two tribes remained faithful to Rohoboam: the house of Judah and the house of Benjamin, and henceforth this lineage will be called the kingdom of Judah. The remaining ten tribes assembled and chose Jerobo’am king, which thence forward formed the kingdom of Israel.

Arrived at home, Rohoboam gathered his forces with the avowed intention, to force the seceding tribes into subjugation under his scepter, but a prophet, Shemayah, opposed this design in the name of God and the war-preparations were discontinued and every one went home to his tent.

Thus the nation separated, greatly to the detriment of the mission assigned to it, into two kingdoms, that of Judah and that of Israel.

II.

JEROBO’AM INTRODUCES IDOL WORSHIP.

Jerobo’am, the first king of Israel, chose Shechem as his capital and fortified it, he also made Penuel a fortified city.

But now the newly coronated king of Israel calculated thus: The national sanctuary, the Temple, being in Jerusalem and when the people of Israel go there, as they are wont to do, to sacrifice before the Lord, they might be influenced and urged to unite again with the kingdom of Judah and then his life would be in danger. To avoid such a possibility, the king, after taking counsel, had two golden calves made, of which he placed one at Beth-El and one at Dan; these idols he introduced to the people, saying: “You have been long enough going up to Jerusalem; behold, here are thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”

At the same time he made a house of the high-places and ordained priests, to minister before the calves and in the high-places, out of all classes of the people.

In order, that the people should not miss their feast, he designed,

that on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, the mosaical feast of booths, the same should be held in honor to the idols as introduced, and on that day he himself mounted the altar at Beth-El and at Dan and offered sacrifices. Thus Jeroboam officially introduced idol worship and led the people astray from the mosaical institutions.

On one of these feasts, when the king had offered before the golden calf at Beth-el, a prophet from Judah came and boldly rebuked the king for his sinful designs, predicting at the same time, that a time would come, when upon this very altar the false priests, that were administering here, should be slain thereon and human bones be burned on it.

The king, being thus boldly rebuked in the presence of all the people, gave orders to have the prophet arrested, but no one was there to execute the word—they all dreaded these inspired men, who, without fear, and with holy zeal opposed every wrong and every deed, that led the people off from the worship of the God of Israel.

Jeroboam, seeing himself isolated, wished to make his peace with the man of God and invited him to partake some food, but was refused in these words: "If thou wert to give me the half of thy house, I would not go in with thee, neither would I eat bread, nor drink water in this place."

Returning homeward by an other road, the prophet was lured into a house at Beth-El, by an old man, who pretended to be also a prophet, and who claimed to have received a message to feed his colleague. By following the old man, the prophet violated the orders, with whom he was intrusted and the punishment soon overtook him. When on his way towards Judah he was killed by a lion; his remains were found and conveyed into the house of the old man, who interred them at Beth-El.

At the same time Abiyah, the son of the king, fell sick and the latter ordered his wife to disguise and with rich presents to go to Shiloh, to the prophet Achiyahu, "who spoke of me, that I should become king over Israel; he will tell thee, what is to become of the lad."

The wife of Jeroboam arrived at Shiloh in disguise and went to see the old prophet Achiyahu, whose eyes were so dim of old age, that he could no more see. But he knew already, that she was coming and greeted her thus: "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why is this, that thou feignest to be another? but I am sent to thee with a hard message."

The prophet then charged her with the following message to Jeroboam : "Thus hath said the Lord, the God of Israel : For as much as I exalted thee from the midst of the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel ; and I rent the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it unto thee ; whereas thou hast not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed after me with all his heart, to do only, what is right in my eyes ; thou hast done more evil than all that were before thee ; and thou art gone and hast made unto thyself other gods, and molten images. to provoke me to anger, and me hast thou cast behind thy back : Therefore, behold will I bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, also the guarded and fortified in Israel. Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat ; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the heavens eat, for the Lord had spoken it. But thou, arise now, go to thy own house ; when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him ; for this one alone shall come of Jeroboam's family to the grave, because there hath been found in him some good thing toward the Lord, the God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."

The wife of Jeroboam went home and when she came to Therza and entered her house, the child died ; and the lad was buried and mourned for by all Israel.

Jeroboam had reigned over Israel twenty-two years when he died ; his son Nadab succeeding him on the throne.

III.

ROHOBOAM, ABIYAM, ASSA AND JEHOSHAPHAT KINGS OF JUDAH. FROM 3010—3094 A. M. 978—894 B. C.

Rohoboam, king of Judah, was forty-one years old, when he became king and seventeen years he reigned in Jerusalem over the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin.

During his reign the people introduced high - places, standing images and groves on every high hill and under every green tree.

In the fifth year of Rohoboam's reign, the king of Egypt, Shishak,

came to Jerusalem and took the treasures out of the temple and the king's palace and also the golden shields, that Solomon had made.

Rohoboam died and his son Abiyam became king in his place ; he reigned but three years and followed in the footsteps of his father, idol worship was continued during his time. He died and Assa, his son, succeeded him.

Assa reigned in Jeusalem fourty-one years. His government is noted for reformatations introduced. He cleared his domains from idol worships, which his father had left to exist, and brought of the treasures, which his father had collected in the temple of the Lord.

His contemporary on the throne of Israel was Basha. When the latter came forth, to make war with the king of Judah, Assa sent messengers to Ben-hadad, king of Syria, residing at Damascus, proposing an alliance in defence against the king of Israel.

The alliance between the king of Judah and that of Syria was effected and in the forthcoming war with Israel, Basha was compelled to desist. The fortifications of Ramah, which were build by Basha, were destroyed by Assa and with the stones and the timbers thereof he fortified Gebah of Benjamin and Mipah.

Assa died and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, who was thirty-five years old, when he became king and reigned twenty-five years. He followed the policy of his father Assa ; from the idol worship he only left the high places, where the people sacrificed.

He lived in peace with his contemporary, the king of Israel, Achab, because his son and successor, Joram, had married Athalia, daughter of Achab.

IV.

NADAB, BASHA, ELAH, ZIMRI, OMRI AND
HIS SON ACHAB, KINGS OVER ISRAEL.
FROM 3032 A. M. 956 B. C.—3093 A. M. 895. B. C.

Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, became king in Israel in the second year of Assa's reign in Judah and ruled but two years, he adopted his father's policy in regard to idolatry. Basha, tho son of Achiyah from the tribe of Issachar, conspired against Nadab and when the

latter was besieging Gibethon of the Philistines, Basha smote him and reigned in his stead; he inaugurated his reign by executing every living soul, that belonged to the house of Jeroboam.

But when Basha walked in the ways of his predecessors on the throne of Israel, practiced idol worship and did not use his influence to restore the worship of the God of Israel, Jehu, the son of Chalani, a prophet came to the king and said: "For as much as I lifted thee up out of the dust, and set thee as prince over my people Israel, and thou hast walked in the ways of Jeroboam, and hast induced my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; behold, I will sweep out after Basha, and after his house; and I will render thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

Basha had reigned over Israel twenty-four years, when he died and his son Elah succeeded him in the twenty-sixth year of Assa, king of Judah.

Elah resided in Thirza and reigned but two years. One of his officers Zimri conspired against and killed him. Zimri then usurped the throne of Israel and exterminated all the house of Basha.

Zimri occupied the throne only seven days. At the time of his conspiracy against Elah, the people were at Gibethon of the Philistines, besieging it and when they heard, what had transpired at Thirza they promoted Omri, the captain of the army, to be their king.

Omri at once left Gibbethon with his army and marched to Thirza. Zimri, seeing, that the city was taken by force, went into the kings palace, fired it and thus perished in the flames,

Not all the people of Israel did adhere to Omri, one portion had promoted Thibni, the son of Ginath to be king, but Omri and his party prevailed against Thibni and his men, and when the latter had died, Omri was acknowledged king over all Israel.

Omri bought a mountain, called Samaria of Shemer, and built a city thereon, which he called in honor of its former owner Samaria; here he made his residence. Six years he reigned in Thirza and six in Samaria; he then died, having lived and worked in the same manner as his predecessors on the throne of Israel. His son, Achab, succeeded him.

V.

ACHAB. ELIJAH, THE PROPHET.

All the kings of Israel, more or less, have adhered to the schism as introduced by Joroboam. The golden calves were still the places assigned for worship for the people of Israel, thus the mosaical institutions were disregarded and neglected, but not utterly exterminated.

The prophets were always agitating the people and openly and secretly opposed the king, who led them astray, and we have all reasons to believe, that in all the changes in the dynasty of the kings of Israel, the prophets were powerful agents.

But when Omri removed the capitol from Thirza, an open city, easy to be besieged, to Shomron or Samaria, a well fortified town on a mountain, the aspect for the prophets, to gain their design, became more gloomy. The king in his well guarded fort could now oppose the prophets.

When Achab had succeeded his father, he officially renounced the mosaical institutions. Influenced by his wife Izebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Zidonians, the king erected a house for the idol Ba'al in Shomron, made groves for the Astarde, ordaining a host of priests to guard these idol sanctuaries and he himself went to worship there.

Izebel, not satisfied with her success in converting the king to become a pagan himself, she induced him to use all his efforts to convert Israel into a pagan and despotic kingdom. All the prophets were prescribed, many of them killed. But Achab and Izebel did not succeed in annihilating that party, which influenced and agitated by the prophets, were opposing such illegality and despotism. Even on the court of Achab was a devout servant of the God of Israel, Obadiah, who saved hundred of the prescribed prophets, hiding them fifty by fifty in a cave and providing for them.

So matters stood, when Elijah, the Tishbite rose to eminence among the prophets of the Lord; he was a man of the rural districts of Gilead; more than this is not known of him, no one knows, whence he came, nor where he went. He was the most powerful opponent

Achab and Izebel had ; he went hither and thither and wherever he had an opportunity, he agitated the people and incensed them against their pagan king Achab and his queen Izebel. Many were the exertions of the king to lay hands upon the prophet, but he was always foiled in his designs.

When during a period of sterility, which lasted two years, Elijah traversed the country in his mission to agitate the people, he was thought to be at the brook Kerith, where he had remained as long as he could obtain water and food thereabouts, he was at Zeraphath, which belonged to Zidon, where he supported a widow and her son for a while and before leaving, had saved the child from an early death.

Wherever he came, the stranger was honored and he used his influence in favor of his opposition against the paganizing endeavors of Achab and Izebel. This period of sterility he said, was a punishment of the Lord, the God of Israel, for the idol worship as practiced by the king and queen and introduced into Israel.

The people, who were suffering by the famine, caused by the sterility, thus were directed to look for the prime cause of their sufferings and hardships and to behold them in the person of the pagan couple, that occupied the throne of Israel.

When in the third year of the sterility, famine was very griveous, even in Samaria, Achab and the superintendent of his house, Obadiah, went through the country in two different roads, to see if no water could be found somewhere, so that not all the animals would die.

Just then Elijah found himself sufficiently supported by the people, and on meeting Obadiah, he directed him to report to Achab, that he was there to speak the king. The pious Obadiah was very much terrified on receiving such a message, because he knew, that Achab and Izebel were for years wishing for nothing, but to be able to lay hands upon the agitator of Israel ; but when Elijah had assured him, that he was safe from the rage of the king, he went, and passed the word to Achab.

Achab came to the place and his first words, on meeting Elijah were : “Art thou he, that troubleth Israel !” Upon which the prophet promptly answered : “I have not troubled Israel ; but thou and thy father’s house, through your forsaking the commandments of the Lord and because thou hast followed the Ba_{al}im.”

Elijah then prevailed upon Achab to call a convention of Israel upon the mount Carmel, and not to forget the priests of the Baal, "who eat at the table of Izebel."

VI.

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL.

The convention was called by Achab. Among the Israelites probably the greatest number were devotees of Elijah and his cause, they were represented by the prophet, the rest were represented by four hundred and fifty priests of the Baal.

Here, in the presence of the people, the priests and the king, the prophet opened the convention with these words: "How long halt ye between the two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him; and if Ba'al—follow him."

To settle this question between the service of the true God and idol worship, Elijah proposed the representatives of the two parties the four hundred and fifty men of Baal and he, to slay a bullock as sacrifice, they in honor of Baal, he in honor of the God of Israel and that the God, which answers by fire (inspiring the heart and soul of the present multitude with love toward his service) shall be the true God.

The beast was given to the priest of Baal and, because they were in the majority, Elijah gave them the first chance. They slew their animal, placed it upon the altar, dedicated to the idol Baal and began their service; when at noon time the idol had not yet made an impression upon the assemblage, Elijah mocked them, saying: "Call with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is holding council, or he is busy in some pursuit, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and may thus awaken."

The priests of Baal, being excited and roused to the highest point of fanaticism by the mocking and scoffing of Elijah, went on in their service and cut themselves with knives and spears, according to their custom, until the blood rushed forth, but all to no purpose, Baal remained silent, the assemblage was unmoved.

Towards evening—the people had ample time to reflect upon the differences between the simple worship of God and the heinous service

of the idol—Elijah told the priests to desist and he built an altar of twelve stones, by it indicating the unity of the twelve tribes in the worship of God ; the beast was slain and placed upon that altar dedicated to the Lord God and to the cause of *all* Israel. All this done he prayed in powerful simple words, saying: “O Lord, God of Abraham of Isaac and Jacob, this day let it be known, that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that at thy word I have done all these things. Answer me, O Lord, answer me, and let all this people know, that thou, O Lord, art the true God, and thou wilt then have turned their hearts back again.”

These words and the cool and deliberate manner, with which Elijah went to work on this momentous occasion, had the desired effect, a fire came down from heaven, the adhesion to the faith of Israel was at once and powerfully re-awakened, all the people fell upon their faces and said : “The Lord—he is God ! The Lord—he is God !”

Achab saw, that his policy was not supported, his power was broken and he had to silently witness the execution of the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, who were slain then and there by the agitated assemblage on the command of Elijah.

By some indications Elijah saw, that soon the country would have the long expected and needed rain, so he advised Achab to go home and he himself went with him as far as the entrance to Yizreel ; undoubtedly to protect the king, should the agitated people show signs of insulting him.

Mortified and grieved Achab came to his home and here he related, all that Elijah had accomplished, to Izebel, that Israel had disclaimed his policy and that the priests of Baal were slain.

Foiled in her design to make Israel a pagan kingdom, she sent word to Eliyah saying : “So may the gods do to me and may they thus continue, if about this time to-morrow I do not render thy life as the life of any one of them.”

Whether this was done with or without Achab’s consent, we know not, but it is surmised, that the king was not consulted, because he must have seen by the convention on Carmel, where popular opinion was opposed to his policy, that to prescribe the prophet was a dangerous step, which could eventually dethrone him and basing on this supposition or rather on these facts, the king entirely changed his policy as we shall see hereafter.

VII.

ACHAB'S REFORMATION. WAR WITH BEN-HADAD.

Elijah, having received due notice of the intention of Izebel, the queen, went to Beer-sheba in Judah, where he left his servant and he himself went on a days journey in the wilderness.

After the convention on Mount Carmel Ahab changed his policy ; the Baal and astarte worship were discontinued, but it seems, that this prohibition, if such was decreed, had no effect upon his wife Izebel or any of his subjects, who still adhered to these idols, but that such illegal proceedings were carried on secretly. This becomes evident by the facts, that Ahab in the following events was advised by prophets of the Lord, which would not have been the case, had the king not changed his pagan inclinations.

In this period falls the war of the Syrian-king Ben-hadad with Israel.

Ben-hadad allied with thirty two petit kings, overrun the possession of Israel and came to besiege the capital of the kingdom, Samaria. The Syrian chief sent messengers to Ahab, stating, that he should deliver up all his silver and gold, his wives and children, or else the capital would be taken by force. Ahab, in the face of the pending danger, the Syrian army was well provided with horses and chariots, was satisfied to sacrifice his own, to save the capital, but Ben-hadad not being satisfied sent word back, that he not alone demands the private property of the king, but also that of his servants and subjects.

To this insult the king could not yield without consulting the elders. These were convoked and in council it was resolved to reject the proposition. This answer was sent to Ben-hadad, who then sent back word, that he would open hostilities and furthermore added : "May the gods do so unto me, and continue to do so, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people, that are in my train." To which Ahab answered: "Let him, that girdeth on the armour not boast himself as he, that putteth it off.

War was now officially declared ; Ahab must have felt very much discomfitted at the prospect, because the Syrian army, increased by the thirty-two petit kings, was outnumbering his forces by far. Here a certain prophet came to the king, predicting a siege over all this

multitude ; being asked by whom this siege should be accomplished, he answered : “By means of the young men of the princes of the provinces.”

It is supposed, that these young men were mainly influenced by the party of prophets, that they as a unit supported the prophets in opposing paganism and despotism, but now, after Achab had made his peace with the prophets, they would rally under his flags and to show their confidence in the new state of affairs, assist him in defeating the enemy.

Two hundred and thirty-two young men of the nobles were mustered into service, this small force was to be supported by seven thousand men of Israel.

Meanwhile Ben-hadad and his allied kings, having too great a confidence in the multitude of their united armies, retired to the principal tent and engaged in a revelry, leaving the besieging army take care for themselves. When the young noblemen came out of Samaria, the fact was reported to Ben-hadad, who gave the answer ; “If they be come out on peace, catch them alive, and if they be come out for war, alive must ye catch them.”

But the Syrian chief was deceived, the young nobles were brave and supported by the army of Israel, they achieved a signal victory, Ben-hadad himself only escaped by the fleetness of his horse.

The prophet now again came to Achab advising him, to be on his guard, for said he : “Go strengthen thyself, and mark and see, what thou hast to do ; for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.”

REMARKS :

To clearly understand the forthcoming events it is necessary to remark in connection thereto, that the party of the prophets, who were powerful, both, in numerical strength and intelligence, in their efforts to oppose all illegality and despotism and in their zeal, to uphold and maintain the mosaical institutions and laws they had spread their agents all over, not alone in the country of Judah and Israel, but also in Syria and even at the Syrian court. The conventions of this party, which most of the time, was antagonistic to the reigning power, must have been held secretly and in secluded places and we presume, that the place, where Elijah

retired, when he fled from before Izebel, one days journey from Beer-sheba in Judah in the wilderness, under a broom-brush (a plant, growing plentifully in the desert to a hight of about eight feet,) was *the place*, assigned to the prophets as the rendez-vous at that time.

VIII.

SECOND WAR WITH BEN-HADAD. THE VINE-YARD OF NABOTH, THE YIZRE-ELITE.

As the prophet had predicted it came to pass. At the return of the year, Ben-hadad re-appeared with his hosts to take vengeance on Israel : but this time he would not venture upon the mountainous regions, where he could not use his chariots and horsemen to good advantage, the battle should be fought in the valley ; and the Syrian army came to encamp at Aphek ; they filled the country thus, that the israelitish forces, which were drawn up opposite, looked like “two little flocks of goats.”

The movements of the Syrian army were no secrets to the prophets and one therefore approached Achab, saying : “Thus saith the Lord ; forasmuch as the Syrians have said, “a God of the hills is the Lord, but he is not God of the valleys, will I deliver all this multitude into thy hand ; and ye shall know, that I am the Lord.”

Advised by the prophet, Achab remained on the hill for six days, undoubtly until the Syrian chief was outgeneraled. On the seventh day the battle was fought in the valley and the Israelites smote the Syrians and the retreating army was forced to search safety in Aphek ; but the walls of that city were broken and the enemy thus was at the mercy of the Israelites. We are told, that twenty-seven thousand of the Syrians fell in the city besides a hundred thousand on the battlefield.

Ben-hadad himself had sought refuge in the city, and the house, where he was hidden, was surrounded and guarded by the Israelites. The king of Syria, being in this critical condition, was advised to sue for mercy, which was done and granted by Achab, who then made a covenant with him, by which the territory of Israel was to be evacuat-

ed by the Syrians, and Israel was allowed to open a trading post in Damascus, the capital of the Syrian empire.

After the two kings had separated, Achab returned home, elated with the achieved victory ; but on his way he was accusted by a prophet, who severely rebuked him for acting as he did, in leaving Ben hadad go, knowing, that a word given by that king was not sufficient guarantee for the future safety of his domains; the king, seeing probably the justice of these remarks, arrived home at Samaria, "low-spirited and displeased."

In this mood the king requested a citizen of Yizreel, Naboth, to sell him a vine-yard, with which he intended to enlarge the park, belonging to his palace at that place, he either would give him an other vine-yard better than his, or pay him the price in money, if he so choses. Both these propositions Naboth declined, he was not willing to sell or part with the vine-yard, which was an inheritance of his fathers. Displeased with these proceedings Achab went home low-spirited and chagrined, so that he refused to take nourishment.

Izebel, the queen, finding the cause of the king's displeasure, told him to go eat and drink and be merry, for she said : "I will myself give thee the vine-yard of Naboth, the Yizre-elite.

The treacherous and unprincipled woman now wrote letters to the elders of the city, where Naboth lived, signed in the kings name and sealed with the kings seal, that they should proclaim a fast, call a convention and place Naboth at their head, and that in the presence of all the assemblage, two worthless men should accuse Naboth, of having blasphemed God and the king, whereupon they should pass sentence upon him, bring him out of the city and stone him to death.

The advice of the queen was followed : a fast was proclaimed, Naboth accused of having blasphemed God and the king, sentence was passed upon him and he was stoned to death. When the news of Naboth's death reached the queen, she went to Achab, saying : "Arise take possession of the vine-yard of Naboth, the Yizre-elite, which he refused to give thee for money ; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And Achab rose up, to go down to the vine-yard of Naboth, to take thereof possession.

IX.

ELIJAH IN THE WILDERNESS. HIS RE-APPEARANCE
BEFORE ACHAB.

Elijah, as we have seen, had sought refuge before Izebel in the wilderness, and there he lived secluded and in perfect safety. His mission for the moment was fulfilled ; Achab had learned to abolish his policy and make friendship with the powerful party of the prophets. But when the news reached him of the treacherous, illegal and despotic deed, which was committed on Naboth, in Achab's name, Elijah, the energetic, zealous patriot grew dispondent, he doubted of ever accomplishing his mission and life became a burden to him, he wished to die. In this mood he went to the mount Horeb, where he remained in a cave. The hollowed place and the solitude, the prophet found himself in, caused him to reflect seriously upon the ways and means, which he had made use of in attaining the desired ends. The drought of these reflections is rendered most beautifully in a series of visions, which the prophet had, while standing upon the hollowed mount. He reviewed his actions in behalf of the Lord of Hosts, lamented the loss of his associates, who had been slain with the sword and closed by saying: "and I am left by myself alone, and they have sought my life, to take it away." Had he, or had he not entered upon the right way in his endeavors to re-establish the service of the Most High, was the problem to be solved in his mind.

Powerfully agitated by such thoughts, he beheld a vision, he saw a "wind, great and strong, rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks, went before the Lord, but not in the wind was the Lord ; and after the wind was an earthquake, but not in the earthquake was the Lord ; and after the earthquake was a fire, but not in the fire was the Lord ; and after the fire was the sound of a soft whisper. And it came to pass when Elijah heard it, that he concealed his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave."

The question was solved. Elijah deemed his actions too severe and harsh, like the wind, the earthquake and the fire, he had intended to destroy at once, but the Lord was not in either ; thus he could not

succeed, the soft, zephyr like whisper was the abode of the Lord, silently, cautiously and unpretending he must go to work and success can not fail him. His disponding heart revived, life was no more valueless to him and in a subsequent council of prophets and patriots he was again persuaded to resume his work.

In this council it was ascertained, that Ben-hadad was not at all willing to verify his word, given to Achab, the territory of Israel was not evacuated, and Elijah received the commission, to anoint Chazael king over Syria, Jehu, the son of Nimshi, king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shophat of Abel-mecholah, as prophet in his place.

(We have all reason to believe, that the anointing of Elisha was conferring upon him the leadership of the party of prophets and patriots, because in no instance heretofore do we find mention made of anointing a prophet : these were taught in the prophet schools, from which they were sent forth, prophets of the Lord without any other ceremony; only kings were anointed).

Elijah went forth on his mission, and coming towards Abel-mecholah he found Eliha ploughing ; here he fulfilled the last part of his mission

From thence the prophet went to Yizreel to meet Achab in his ill-gotten vine-yard. When Achab saw Elijah, he greeted him, saying : "Hast thou found me, O my enemy"? Achab knew, that he had done wrong and that the prophet was rebuking him for his treacherous action.

Elijah now predicted, that the dynasty of Achab should be dealt with in the same way as that of Jeroboam and Baash and that furthermore concerning Izebel, his unprincipled consort, the dogs should eat her in the valley of Yizre'el, but that the dogs should leak his blood in the very same place, where the innocent blood of Naboth was spilt.

Achab, hearing this terrible sentence from the mouth of a man, of whom he knew, that he was at the head of a powerful party, who were able to make true these predictions, humbled himself before Elijah, rent his garments, clothed himself in sackcloth and walked about bare-footed.

Seeing the agony of soul, in which the king appeared, the prophet consoled him, saying, that, because he had humbled himself, the evil, pronounced upon his house, shall not be executed in his reign, but in that of his son.

X.

ACHAB AND JEHOSEPHAT UNITE AGAINST THE
SYRIANS. ACHAB'S DEATH.

For three years there was peace in Israel. For some reason or other Achab did not take any steps to compel Ben-hadad to come up to the requirements of the covenant as concluded between the two monarchs at Aphek and there were yet some cities in the territory of Israel in the possession of the Syrian empire.

In the third year, the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, came to pay a visit to Achab the king of Israel. Here the two monarchs considered that Ramoth in Gilead was belonging to Israel's territory, but nevertheless it was still in the hands of the Syrians, and they made up their minds to unite their forces and re-take it. But before doing so, the monarchs wished to have the advice of the prophets.

About four hundred prophets were assembled and they declared themselves in unison in favor of recapturing Ramoth in Gilead and prophesied that the king would be prosperous and Ramoth would fall in his hands.

But Jehoshaphat of Judah was not well satisfied with the predictions of the four hundred, and to comply with his wish messengers were dispatched to bring Michayahu, son of Yimlah, a prophet of some renown, into the presence of the both kings. He alone advised the people to desist from this war, but his word was not heeded, he was imprisoned, and hostilities commenced.

In the forthcoming battle near Ramoth-gilead Achab king of Israel was disguised. Jehoshaphat alone was clothed in regal garments, because the king of Syria had given his orders that his captains should mainly direct their attack against the king of Israel.

In the heat of the battle Jehoshaphat was taken for the king of Israel and in consequence thereof was greatly in danger, but as soon, as the Syrian captains found their mistake, they desisted from him.

By a mere accident Achab was wounded by an arrow in his chariot, but he remained yet a while standing to encourage his men, but towards evening he died.

“And there went a proclamation throughout the camps at the going down of the sun, saying : Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.”

Israrl had lost the battle, the king dead, they left the battle-field.

Achab was brought to Samaria to be entombed there by the side of his father Omri. The chariot which had received the dropping life blood of the wounded king was cleaned before Yizreel and the dogs came to lick up the blood.

Achab reigned twenty two years and was succeeded by his son Achazyahu.

REMARKS :

The diversities in the predictions of the prophets indicate a breach in the party of the prophets.

XI.

ACHAZYAHU AND HIS POLICY. HIS DEATH. ELIJAH DISAPPEARS. 3095 A. M. 893 B. C.

Achazyahu became king of Israel after his father Achab in the seventeenth year of Jehoshophat the king of Judah.

This king was wholly under the influence of his mother Izebel, he introduced again the worship of Baal and the groves, just as his father had done when he mounted the throne and by so doing caused the prophets to forsake him.

In the second year of his reign he either fell, or was thrown down from his upper chamber in his palace at Samaria and became sick in consequence of this fall. Having no confidence in his idols and being not willing to forsake his policy in regard to the God of Israel he sent messengers to Ekron to the idol of Baalzebub to inquire there whether he would recover from his sickness or not.

Elijah, always being well informed met these messengers and bade them return to the king with the message, he would not recover. When the men had delivered their message the king made inquiry

regarding the man, that bade them go back, and when they said it was a hairy man with a girdle of leather about his loins, Achazyahu said : "It is Elijah the Tishbite."

A squad of fifty men led by a captain were dispatched to take the prophet prisoner, but they were slain, a second and a third squad were sent on the same errand, with the same result.

Achazyahu never rose from his sick bed, he died, after having reigned but two years and because he was childless his brother Jehoram became king in Israel after him.

Elijah the Tishbite was now old and he wished to retire from public life, to end his days in the manner best suited to his inclinations, in utter seclusion.

He had accomplished his design but partially, the mosaical institutions and laws were not introduced during his official career, but he hoped much from his successor Elisha, who was better liked at court, than he ever could hope for himself and who, for that reason could influence the king to reform ; he himself was satisfied with the removal of the Baal and Astarte worship, but his successor he hoped would restore the primitive worship of the God of Israel and would be able to influence the king to discontinue also the worship of the golden calves, which were erected and introduced by Jeroboam.

Elijah was statesman enough to know that it required a man of an other stamp as himself, to accomplish the task, which he had marked down as the mission of the party of the prophets and in his successor he saw this man ; but as long he, the master was there, the scholar would not enter on his duties, he therefore made all preparations to retire from public life ; he visited sundry prophet schools stated his object and admonished them to follow their new leader Elisha, upon whom he would lay his hands, that is, whom he would sanctify as such.

In all these wanderings the teacher Elijah was closely followed by the scholar Elisha ; the latter knew himself and was told by the other prophets, that Elijah wished to retire unobserved and that he was bent upon executing his design, but he would part with his friend, guide, teacher and father but in the very last moment.

Thus they came to the Jordan, where Elijah, after having blessed Elisha took leave and retired, no one ever knew whither.

XII.

JEHORAM KING OF ISRAEL. WAR WITH MOAB.

Jehoram, the new king of Israel, inaugurated his kingdom by a change of policy. He had witnessed the aggravations his father and his brother had to submit to by the hands of the prophets and the people influenced by them, on account of their pagan inclinations, he removed the statue of Baal and the Astarte and officially tolerated the service, as introduced by Jeroboam.

It seems that, after the death of Achab the king of Moab, Mesha, who was tributary to Israel, rebelled and refused to pay the wanted tribute.

To subject that country again Jehoram numbered all Israel, the men he could make use of in his army; he then went to Jehoshophat, king of Judah, asking that monarch whether he would unite with him in the enterprise, and on receiving a favorable answer, the united forces of Judah and Israel went through the country of Edom, then tributary to Judah, whose monarch they prevailed upon to unite with them to bring the rebellious Moab to terms.

For seven days they traveled towards the enemies domains, but on the seventh day water became so scarce, that the three kings began to be fearful, lest they would fall into the hands of Moab, because man and beast were exhausted,

Elisha, who seems to have been with the army of Israel, was called and he, knowing the country, ordered wells to be dug, which gave plenty of water to all.

On the next morning, when the Moabitish army rose, they looked upon the territory which their oponents occupied, a place, which they were want to see dry, the same being now drenched with water, which by a reflection of the sun seemed to them to have a red color, like blood; they thought that this liquid was in reality blood, that the three kings had faught and routed each other, and acting upon this supposition they came forth from their trenches, thinking to make a rich spoil, but they were well received by the united forces and repulsed from place to place, up to their capital Kir-chareseth.

All the places were reduced and the country in a great eara devastated, and the city where the king with his decimated army had

sought refuge was encircled and besieged. When the Moabitish king saw no way of escape out of the city he sacrificed his own son, the heir to his throne upon the walls of the city in the sight of the besieging army; thus denoting that he intended to hold out up to the last man.

Israel could not continue the siege any longer, because news were circulating, that the king of Syria was marching against Samaria, and therefore the united forces desisted and retreated. Thus Edom retained its independence, although it was greatly humbled and desolated.

XIII.

THE SYRIANS DEFEATED.

Jehoram on returning from Moab, wished at once to attack the Syrians, but Elisha advised him to desist. These were his reasons for doing so.

The prophets had erected a new station at or near Jordan; now either Elisha received the news from there or by his agents whom he had at the Syrian court, that the Syrian army was secretly occupying the roads, which Jehoram had to pass to reach the place, where he thought to meet the enemy.

The king of Israel acting under the prophets advise at once adopted new plans, by which he counteracted the secret plan of Ben-hadad, king of Syria.

When it became evident to the Syrian chief that his plans were counteracted by the Israelites, he made a rigid inquiry among his officers, because he thought, there must be a traitor amongst them, but his suspicions were averted when one of his servants stated that Elisha the prophet in Israel, does always know every thing, that happened at the court of Damascus or at any place.

The king at once ordered a scouting party into the country to find the present domicil of the prophet; these returned with the news that Elisha was at Dothan.

A detachment of horsemen, chariots and men were dispatched to secure the prophet; the party arrived at Dothan by night and surrounded the city. When the servant of Elisha rose in the morning, he saw the city encircled by a Syrian squad and came at once to report to his master.

The prophet adopted the best plan that could have been adopted in the emergency. He went out to the enemy and boldly entered into conversation with them, naturally inquiring as to the cause that brought them hither and having heard their orders, he said that this was neither the place, nor could they find here the man they were after, but if they would follow him, he would lead them to the very man, they wished to take.

The Syrians, deceived by the boldness and eloquence of Elisha, were prevailed upon to follow that man, who led them direct to Samaria.

When the king of Israel saw the prophet enter the capital with a Syrian squad, he asked Elisha : Shall I smite them, my father? ” but not alone that the prophet did not allow them to be harmed, he ordered that they shall be treated well and sent home to their master.

Ben-hadad now collected his forces in order to besiege Samaria. The cordon around the city was so effectively drawn, that the supplies were cut off and the inhabitants of the capital suffered from famine ; the misery caused by this campaign was so great, that, as our record relates mothers were eating their own children.

The king on hearing the horrid state, his capital was in, by a woman who brought a complaint before him stating, that she had given up her son for food, on condition that another woman should next give up her son, but now she refused to come up to the agreement and hid her son, rent his garments and resolved to have Elisha executed, because he was prevailing upon the national council to resist all ideas of giving up the place.

The prophet was told of the intentions of the king and he locked himself up with the national council and refused admittance to the kings party, but promised succor in twenty-four hours ; adding that by to morrow supplies shall be so plentiful that fine flour and barley shall be sold as cheap as ever in the most prosperous years. This an officer of the king doubted, and Elijah told unto him : “Behold thou shalt see it with thy eyes, but thereof shalt thou not eat.”

Elisha hastened to Damascus, where he found Ben-hadad dangerously sick. The prophet was waited upon by a superior officer of the court. Chazael, (even the very man, whom Elijah was commissioned to anoint king of Syria in Ben-hadad's place, which mission was entrusted to Elisha,) who inquired whether Ben-hadad was to recover, to which the prophet answered in the negative, stating at the same time, that he, Chazael, will be the next king of Syria.

Ben-hadad did not recover, but died and (probably by the aid of Elisha and his party) Chazael was proclaimed king of Syria and the moment he mounted the throne he re-called the Syrian army that were encamping before Samaria.

The army itself did not know the real cause of their recall; a rumor circulated that the king of Israel had obtained the services of the king of Egypt and of the Hittites, and that these united armies with their horses and chariots were close upon them, they even imagined to hear the sound of the approaching forces and so they left the camp during the night in haste.

Four leprous men who were in a hospital outside of the walls of the city, driven by hunger, went into the Syrian camp to get some provision and finding the tents forsaken they reported this to the officers of the watch on the gates, who in their turn reported to the king.

When the news spread in town, and all doubts were dispelled regarding the veracity of the tidings, the gates of the city were opened to allow the hunger-stricken subjects to go into the camp and provide themselves with supplies, but to maintain some order and to avoid a fatal rush, an officer, the same who doubted Elisha's word, was stationed in the doorway. He saw the plentitude of the provisions captured but he came not to partake of it, because the rush became so immense, that he was suffocated in the endeavor to keep order.

XIV.

JORAM SUCCEEDS JOHOSHOPHAT AND ACHAZYAHU
SUCCEEDS JORAM ON THE THRONE OF
JUDAH. THEIR POLICY.

Jehoshophat had reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years, when he died and his son Joram succeeded him. This king being closely connected with the Achabs family in Israel, because he had a daughter of that monarch as his wife, Athalia, and being under the influence of both, Izebel his mother in-law and Athalia his wife, changed the policy of his father, he introduced the Baal and the Astarte worship in Jerusalem.

During Jorams inglorious reign Edom revolted against Judah, and although the king strained all his power to regain the superiority over that domain, he did not succeed ; Edom retained its independence and elected a king for itself.

At about the same time Libuah, a city, revolted against Joram

All these insurrections of the depending provinces were greatly facilitated by the apathy shown the king by the masses, who disliked him for his change of policy and the introduction of the idol worship in the very heart of the kingdom.

Joram reigned but eight years and was succeeded by his son Achazyahu ; who under the influence of his mother and grandmother followed the policy of his father.

The baneful influence of Izebel was disastrous to the prosperity of both Judah and Israel ; the people lost confidence in their kings and this state of things favored the many insurrections and invasions that took place. The power and glory of Judah and Israel decreased rapidly under the Scepter of that dynasty.

XV.

ACHAZYAHU OF JUDAH AND JEHORAM OF ISRAEL
KILLED. JEHU KING OF ISRAEL, ACHAB'S
DYNASTY OVERTHROWN AND THE
WHOLE FAMILY EXECUTED.

We have seen, that Elijah received the commission to anoint Chazael as king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel and Elisha his successor ; he executed but the last and left it to his scholar to accomplish the first two designs, as necessity calls upon him to do. In conformity to this plan Elisha had anointed Chazael over Syria and by doing so, he had saved Samaria.

It must have been the wish of Elisha, that Israel should not break the peace with Syria, which was kept from the time when Chazael mounted the throne ; but the king of Israel, Jehoram, against the avowed wish and the advice of the prophet, united with Achazyahu of Judah, his nephew, to attack Syria.

Elisha must have looked at the hateful results of the influence of the dynasty of Achab in both kingdoms, with a bleeding heart and the powerful party of which he was the leader, must have come to the conclusion to use all means, to unite the kingdom of Israel and of Judah under one monarch.

To do this, the dynasty of Achab must be overthrown, and the whole family executed. An opportunity soon offered itself and Elisha did not hesitate to make use of it.

In a battle against the Syrians at Ramah Jehoram was wounded and went to Yizreel to get healed ; here he was visited by Achazyahu of Judah.

The army it seemed was still before Ramoth-gilead Now Elisha thought it expedient to fulfill the mission assigned to him by Elijah. He dispatched one of his disciples into the camp with a flacon of oil with the order, to take Jehu, one of the captains of the army, by himself and anoint him king.

The disciple arrived, called Jehu alone, and poured the oil upon him saying ; "I anoint thee as king over the people of the Lord, over Israel," and then went off.

When Jehu returned to his brother officers, they insisted upon him to relate his transactions with the stranger and when they knew all, that the prophet had anointed him king in the name of the Lord, they at once proclaimed his ascension to the throne, in the camp.

Jehu now gave orders that none of the besieging army should be allowed to go forth, he alone with a number of selected warriors rode towards Yizreel.

Jehoram and Achazyahu, amazed by the furious-haste in which Jehu came, went out to meet him. Jehoram asked : Is peace Jehu ! ” To which Jehu answered : “ What peace can there be with the acts of incest of thy mother Izebel and her many witchcraft ? ”

Jehoram turned about and fled, crying out to Achazyahu, his nephew, “ Treachery, Achazyahu,” but a well directed arrow wounded him mortally and he died upon the field which once belonged to Naboth, the Yizreelite.

Also Achazyahu was pursued and mortally wounded in his chariot, he died on the way to Jerusalem, at Megiddo, and his remains were conveyed to his mother.

When Jehu entered Yizreel, Izebel heard of it; she painted her eyes and ornamented her head and stood by the window in her palace. Seeing Jehu she asked : “ Is it peace, O Zimri, who hath slain his master ? ” Upon seeing the hated queen, he gave orders to pitch her out of the window, which was done and she expired trodden down by the horses, on the field of Naboth, and when the conspirators had time to look after her, to give her a decent burial, it was found, that the dogs had feasted upon her flesh and that nothing remained of her, but the skull, the feet and the palm of the hands.

Jehu gave the orders, and all of Achab’s family save Athaliah, mother of the slain king of Judah, were executed ; so that none of them remained, according the words spoken to Achab by Elijah.

In order to rout at once and for ever the Baal worship in Samaria, Jehu ordered all priests and followers of that idol into the temple of Baal — in order, as he said to sacrifice unto that god ; — when the temple was filled from one end to the other, he gave the order and all the priests and followers of Baal were slain, not one escaped ; the statute of the idol was brought out and broken, the temple then was ruined and a common sewer made out of it.

Now although Jehu exterminated the Baal worship out of Israel, he did not regenerate the national religion, nor did he use his power to unite the kingdom of Judah and Israel under his scepter, as the party of the prophets had expected, but he mainly inaugurated the policy of Jeroboam, the service of the two golden calves the one at Dan, the other at Beth-El.

During the reign of Jehu, Israel lost one of the most important possessions, that of Gilead and Bashan, where the tribes of Gad, Reuben and Menasseh dwelt, many of the inhabitants were sold as slaves and the rest cruelly treated by the Syrians, condemned to hard labor etc.

Jehu died, after an inglorious reign of twenty years and his son Jehoachaz became king in his place.

XVI.

ATHALIAH'S CRUELTY. HER DEATH.

The remain of Achazyahu, king of Judah, were brought to Jerusalem and there entombed in the kingly sepulcher; he had reigned but one year.

Athaliah, the mother of the slain king, the only remaining offspring of the Omri dynasty, now assembled all the members of the royal Davidian family, consisting of mostly females and princes under age, upon whom she prevailed to confer upon her the royal dignity, in order to save the family. The royal descendants, dreading the approach of Jehu and knowing the ability of the queen to maintain the diadem, gave their consent and Athaliah became queen of Judah.

But no sooner did Athaliah ascend the throne, when she gave orders to exterminate all the members of the Davidian family, that could possibly aspire to the throne.

From all the family but Joash, son of Achazyahu was saved by the agency of Yehosheba, daughter of Joram the king, who was married to the high priest Yehoyada; she took the child with its nurse and hid it in the temple.

The reign of Athaliah was inaugurated by officially introducing Baal worship, she appointed Nathan her high priest, suspended the laws of the land, nothing but her will was predominant.

This state of affairs could not last very long, not that the Baal worship was too obnoxious to the people, but Athaliah was hated on account of her parentage and her cruelty and the priests and the Levites who lost mostly by the change of policy, assisted in increasing this unpopularity.

This time the conspiracy was instituted by the High priest Jehoyada, under whose care the infant legal heir to the throne was raised. When the party of the kings guardian was strong enough, the conspirators were ushered into the temple, the young king was shown to them and they were requested to take an oath, to support the king and the law.

This done, arms were distributed, Joash, being then only seven years old, was placed upon the royal tribune and crowned by the high priest, amidst the vehement cheering of the assemblage.

The commotion soon spread over the city and all the people came rushing to the temple, also Athaliah, who on seeing the young prince upon the tribune rent her garments and cried treason, treason, but the conspirators were not attacked.

The kings party were so exasperated over the queen that they would have executed her in the temple, but Yehoyadah told them to keep the temple clean from human blood, the queen was brought back to her palace and killed.

As long the king Joash was under the able leadership of Yehoyada his reign was beneficial to the prosperity of the nation, he took good care to regenerate the temple service and ordered the same to be repaired wherever it was found necessary, but when the high priest died, which event took place, shortly after the repairing of the temple was completed, the young king changed his policy.

“He forsook the house of the Lord, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols”; and when rebuked for his illegal doings by Zechariah, the son of his benefactor the high priest Yehoyada, the king instigated the people to stone him, which was done; when expiring Zechariah said to the king: “The Lord will see and require.”

Chazael king of Syria made war against Judah, peace was bought at a high price; all the treasury which was found in the temple and in the kings palace was sent to Damascus and Chazael returned from besieging Jerusalem.

When the danger from the foreign power was dispelled, Joash was assassinated by two of his servants in his sick bed in Beth-millo, and was buried in Jerusalem. Amazyah succeeded his father on the throne of Judah. Joash had reigned forty years.

XVII.

JEHOACHAZ AND JEHOASH, KINGS OF ISRAEL.

ELISHA'S DEATH. JEHOASH OF ISRAEL

CONQUERS AMAZYAH OF JEHUDAH.

AZARYAH, KING OF JUDAH.

Jehoachaz, son of Jehu succeeded his father on the throne of Israel and reigned seventeen years; he walked in the footsteps of his father ; the schism was kept up. During his reign Israel was greatly troubled by Chazael king of Syria, and after him by his son Ben-hadad.

After the death of Jehoachaz his son Jehoash mounted the throne of Israel and reigned for sixteen years.

During the reign of Jehoash, the prophet Elisha became sick and was visited by the king, who on seeing his adviser very low, so that no hope of his recovery could be entertained, lamented greatly; before parting with the dying prophet he wished his last counsel, what he should do with the Syrians, who had gained many victories under his father, and had on that account taken many valuable possessions from the hands of the Israelites. The aged prophet predicted Israel's siege over Syria and then died.

Jehoash, encouraged by these words of the prophet resumed the struggle, with the Syrians and achieved signal victories in three battles over Ben-hadad and retook those places which were conquered by Syria under the reign of his father.

Amazyah, king of Judah, had meanwhile fought successfully with Edom of whom he had seized the city of Sela and called its name Yekteel.

Of the inner policy of the king of Judah we know, that he walked in the ways of the Lord, but he tolerated the high places, where the people sacrificed and burnt incense. He executed the murderers of his

father, but obeying the law of Moses he made not the children responsible for the crime of their fathers.

When Amazyah had returned from his victorious campaign against Edom, he had also brought some edomitish idols, before whom he prostrated himself; a prophet appeared before the king and rebuked him, but all to no effect.

Now Amazyah provoked Jehoash of Israel, to engage in war with him, to this the king of Israel would not listen; but when the ruler of Judah insisted, a battle was fought, in which the army of Amazyah were beaten, the king himself was taken captive by the victorious king of Israel, who went to Jerusalem, took down part of the wall, took the treasury of the temple and of the king's palace and also the children of some noble men as hostages, and returned to Samaria,

Jehoash of Israel died and was followed by his son Jeroboam II.

Amazyah ruled yet in Judah after the death of Jehoash for upwards of fifteen years; but by his change of policy he had many enemies who conspired against him; in consequence of this he fled to Lachish but was followed and after being there about twenty years he was killed and brought to Jerusalem for burial. He reigned twenty-nine years.

The people of Judah now took Uzziyahu, son of Amazyah, and made him king when he was but sixteen years old.

This monarch reigned forty years alone, and about twelve years during the life of his father who was at Lachish; as long he took the counsel of Zecharyahu a wise man, probably a disciple of the prophets, he was very prosperous, he fought successfully against the Philistines, the Arabians and the Ammonites and made them tributary, he built cities in the conquered provinces and had a valliant standing army.

Returned to Jerusalem he fortified the city by building towers with contrivances to shoot from there with arrows and great stones.

Having gained a great name "even to the entrance of Egypt" he seems to have entertained the idea of diminishing the influence of the priests, by appropriating to himself the priestly ministrations, but overcome by leprosy he had to go to the hospital outside the walls of the city, his son Jotham was put over his house.

In this hospital he remained up to his death, and his son Jotham mounted the throne of Judah.

The two principle prophets at this time were Amos and Hosea.

XVIII.

JEROBOAM II, ZACHARIAH, SHALLUM, MENACHEM,
PECKACHYAH, PEKACH AND HOSHEA, KINGS
OF ISRAEL.

Jeroboam II. was a mighty man, he reconquered the lost territory of Israel and established again the former boundary of the kingdom. He reigned forty-one years. Encouraged by the prophet Jonah this monarch accomplished most valiant deeds : but he still kept up the schism as introduced by Jeroboam I., and if we ponder over the prophets Amos and Hoshea that lived in his time, who were constantly preaching and advising, we find that his court became corrupt in his glory, the nobility oppressed the people and even justice was not dealt impartially.

After the death of Jeroboam II. his son Zachariah mounted the throne, but with no better intentions than his father. Six months after his inauguration Shallum conspired against and slew him in the presence of all the people and became king in his place.

Shallum in return was slain by Menachem after he sat upon the throne but one month, and the latter mounted the throne of Israel.

Menachem reigned ten years in Israel. His reign is noticed for cruelty committed on the inhabitants of Thiphshach and for the invasion of Pul king of Assyria. With this monarch Menachem made a bargain, he gave him a thousand talents of silver in order to desist from the campaign against Israel and to support his claims upon the throne. This money he exacted with severity from the people.

After him Peckachyah his son came to the throne, who possessed it but two years, he walked in the ways of his father.

Peckachyah was slain by one of his captains Pekach who then mounted the throne and retained it for upwards of twenty years.

Of these years the prophet Hosea speaks, when he says, there is neither truth, nor love, nor the fear of God in the land, but instead of these perjury, murder, theft, adultery and lies etc.

During the reign of Pekach the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser came, conquered a great part of the territory of Israel, Gilead, Galilee, and the possession of Naphtali and carried the inhabitants off to Assyria.

Pekach was slain by Hoshea, who, after the lapse of nine years, during which he was vice king under the supremacy of Assyria, ascended the throne of Israel and was destined to be the last king of this monarchy.

XIX

JOTHAM AND ACHAZ, KINGS OF JUDAH.

In the second year of Pekach, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziyahu ascended the throne of Judah in Jerusalem, when he was but twenty five years old ; he reigned sixteen years.

Jotham adopted the policy of his father, he honored the national religion, but like his predecessors on the throne he tolerated the continuation of the worship on the high places.

During his reign Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekach, king of Israel, united themselves against Judah, they wished to dethrone Jotham and place in his stead a man by the name of Tabel upon the throne, but they could not succeed.

Jotham died and his son Achaz succeeded him when he was twenty years and he reigned sixteen years.

Achaz officially introduced idol worship, he even went so far as to pass his son through the fire, in accordance to the abominable acts which those nations practiced whom the Lord had driven out from before Israel ; he sacrificed and burnt incense upon the high-places and under every green tree.

Isaiah, the prophet, who had began his reformatory mission in the last year of Uzziyahu protested sternly against such abominations and predicted severe chastisements to Judah and Zion ; but all to no effect. Achaz continued in his evil practices and thus lost the good will of many of his subjects.

In the second or third year of Achaz' reign the kings of Syria and of Israel, Rezin and Pekach, again united to besiege Jerusalem and to place the son of Tabel as vice-king over Judah.

Isaiah, the prophet, encouraged the endangered king, who not alone saw two armies approach his capital, but who had at the same time the chagrin to behold that many of his dissatisfied subjects made common cause with the enemy.

“Take heed and be quiet”; said Isaiah, “fear not, and let thy heart not become faint because of these two stumps of smoking firebrands, before the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Ramalyahu (Pekach.) Thus had said the Lord, it shall not succeed and it shall not come to pass.”

But when the Syrians took Elath and drove the Jews from the city and inhabited the same with Edomeans, then Achaz, in direct opposition to the prophet Isaiah, made a covenant with Tiglath-pileser king, of Assyria; he took all gold and silver that was found in the house of God and in the treasury of the king, sent it to Assyria with the request, that the king should assist him in his war against Syria and Israel.

Tiglath-pileser at once marched toward Damascus, the capital of Syria, captured it and led its inhabitants into captivity, Rezin himself he put to death. Thus the capital of Judah was saved.

This campaign being ended, Achaz, to establish the friendship between Judah and Assyria more firmly, went to Damascus to pay Tiglath-pileser a visit. To show unto the king of Assyria, that he is not alone connected with him politically, but also religiously, Achaz made sundry changes in the temple to please the king, as soon he returned from his visit, principally among these was the establishing of an altar of which he had seen the exact counterpart at Damascus, which he posted in the place of the copper altar and upon which the priests henceforth should sacrifice.

Achaz died after an inglorious reign of sixteen years and his son Hezekiah mounted the throne.

XX.

HOSHEA, THE LAST KING OF ISRAEL. 3259 A. M.
729 B. C.

In the twelfth year of Achaz of Judah, Hoshea, son of Elah descended the throne of Israel.

The former king of Israel was already killed some nine years before 3250 A. M, 738 B. C., but from that time up to the ascension to the

throne by Hoshea we have no reliable sources what government there was in that time, but it is supposed, that the Assyrians, who under Tiglath pileser conquered a good part of Israel's territory in Pekach's time, Gilead, Galilee and Naphtali's possession, left garrisons in the principal cities, made Israel a province, subject to Assyria and left Hoshea there as a vasalle; again we do not know exactly by what means Hoshea, after nine years ascended to the throne as an independent king, after he had effected an alliance with So, king of Egypt.

Meanwhile Tiglath-pileser had died and Shalmanesser became king in his place. When the wanted tribute of Israel was not paid, the Assyrian king opened hostilities against Hoshea.

Three years Samaria was besieged, and finally in the ninth year of Hoshea, the last king of Israel, Shalmanesser had conquered all Israel, taken Samaria, placed the king into prison and led Israel away as exiles into Assyria, where they settled in Chalach and in Chaber by the river Gozan in the cities of Media.

Thus the kingdom of Israel ceased to exist and the Israelites were carried into exile in the year 3268 A. M. 720 B. C.

But Shalmanesser did not leave the land unsettled. After he had led Israel away, he brought people from Babylon, from Cuttah, from Aova, from Chamoth and Sepharuayim and they settled in the land of Israel.

These new settlements were idolatrous; upon their own request Shalmanesser brought them a priest, whom he had taken away from Samaria, who afterwards lived in Beth-el and taught also the service of God, but nevertheless, they did not give up their idols and thus became a mixture of paganism and Judaism.

XXI.

HEZEKIAH'S REIGN.

Hezekiah mounted the throne of Judah, when he was twenty-five years old; he reigned twenty-nine years.

His reign is noted for many valiant deeds, he faught successfully against the Philistines, and seeing the disastrous effect which the

alliance with Assyria had brought to Judah under his father, who, to gain the friendship of that power, had so changed the national religion, as to please the allied king, by which the good will of his subjects was lost, Hezekiah broke that alliance.

He removed all idols, cut down the groves and high places, restored again the primitive service as prescribed by Moses, and in doing so, gained for himself the name of the best King since the time of David. "In the Lord the God of Israel did he trust; and after him there was not his like among all the Kings of Judah, nor among those that were before him. And he adhered to the Lord, and turned not away from following him; but he kept his commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses."

But by and with all the personal virtues of the young King, he could not check the rapid down fall of the nation. The people had by the corrupt proceedings of his ancestors on the throne, become corrupt themselves, licentiousness, violence, opulence and oppression of the poor had been too predominant for the last century. the king was powerless.

The inspired Isaiah thus reproved the people :

"Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: Children have I nourished and brought up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: Israel does not know, my people does not consider. Wo, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, seed of evildoers, children that are corrupt: they have forsaken the Lord, they have incensed the Holy one of Israel, they are departed backward. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores; they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with oil. Hear the word of the Lord: For what serveth me the multitude of your sacrifices? I am sated with the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fatted beasts; and the blood of bullocks, and of sheep, and of the goats, I do not desire. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are become a burden unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will withdraw my eyes from you; yea, when you make ever so many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves

“ clean ; put away the evil of your deeds from before my eyes ; cease
“ to do evil. Learn to do well ; seek for justice, relieve the oppress-
“ ed, do justice to the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

But the words of the inspired man were listened to with apathy and the people continued in their violence, oppression and wickedness, as before ; then the prophet predicted their downfall, stating that in it, the justice of God shall be verified.

“Wo unto those, that cause house to join on house, bring field near
“ to field, till there is no more room, so that ye may be left alone as
“ the inhabitants in the midst of the land. Truly many houses shall
“ become desolate, yea, great and beautiful ones without an inhabi-
“ tant. Wo unto those, that rise up early in the morning, that they
“ may run after strong drink ; that continue until late in the twilight,
“ till wine inflame them ! And there are harp and psaltery, tambour-
“ ine and flute, and wine at their drinking feasts ; but the deeds of
“ the Lord they regard not, and the works of his hands they behold
“ not. Therefore are my people led into exile, for want of knowl-
“ edge ; and their honorable men suffer from famine, and their multi-
“ tude are panting with thirst. And bent down shall be the son of
“ man, and humbled shall be the man, and the eyes of the lofty shall
“ be humbled. And the Lord of Hosts shall be exalted in judgment
“ and the holy God shall be sanctified by displaying righteousness.”

But the corruption of the people was not checked, and the words of the prophet were lost, even his sad predictions of the downfall of the nation and the impending exile passed unheeded.

Meanwhile in the sixth year of Hezekiah, the kingdom of Israel was overrun by Shalmanesser and Hoshea and his subjects carried off into exile ; but also this disaster to one part, the greater, of the israelitish nation, did not put a stop to the revelry, opulence, violence and licentiousness of the people of the Kingdom of Judah, although the King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah made all efforts to that effect,

XXII.

SENNACHERIB BESIEGES JERUSALEM, BUT DID NOT
SUCCEED. 3276 A. M. 712 B. C.

Eight years after the desolution of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmanesser, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib, who had succeeded Shalmanesser on the throne of Assyria, to compel Judah to a depending province of Assyria, as it had been under Achaz, overflowed the country with war and took all fortified towns of Judah.

Hezekiah, in order to save the country sent to Sennacherib to Lachish a message, that he had sinned, (by breaking the alliance with Assyria) and that he would do, what was asked of him, provided, the enemy would leave. To this the Assyrian king responded, that Judah should pay a tribute of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

Hezekiah took all the silver and gold, that was found in the temple and in his own palace and sent it into the Assyrian camp, but Sennacherib nevertheless sent three of his officers Tharthan, Rabсарis and Rabshakeh with a strong army towards Jerusalem.

The besieging army came to the aqueduct of the upper pool; from here the officer in command send word to Hezekiah to come out to him, but the king refused to obey such command and commissioned Elyakim the superindent of his house, Shebua the Scribe and Yoash the Recorder to proceed to the enemies camp and hear what the officer had to say.

Rabshakeh in haughty terms rebuked the king for his rebellion against the Assyrian empire and spoke blasphemously of the God of Israel in whom Hezekiah had put his trust, saying that neither God nor idol could save the country from the all powerful hand of his mighty king, but promised the people who should come to him a better land than this and a better protection than that of the king of Judah.

Hezekiah, on hearing these words was very much grieved and went into the temple of the Lord, where he prostrated himself in prayer. The three ambassadors who had heard the words of Rabshakeh were sent to Isaiah with a message of the King, that the assyrian officer had

blasphemed the Lord and that he, Isaiah, should pray in behalf of the endangered capital.

Isaiah sent answer to the King, that he should not at all be dismayed at the haughty words of the lad of the Assyrian King, the capital was not in danger, because the enemy would be compelled to return to his own land and there the King would be killed by the sword.

Hezekiah hereupon refused to capitulate and Rabshekah returned and delivered this message to Sennacherib, whom he found besieging Libuah.

Meanwhile the Assyrian King received messages, that Phirhakah, King of Ethiopia was coming up against him with a powerful army ; and wishing to be done with Judah before he would enter upon the war with Ethiopia he again sent a message to Hezekiah demanding the capitulation of the city, intimating again, that the God, into whom he had put his trust, was not powerful enough to save him from the hands of Sennacherib.

Hezekiah, after receiving this message prepared into the temple of the Lord and there made the following supplication : “O Lord, God of Israel, who dwellest between the Cherubims, thou art the true God, thou above, for all the Kingdoms of the earth ; for it is thou who hast made the heavens and the earth. Bend down, O Lord, thy ear, and hear ! Open, O Lord, thy eyes and see ! and hear the words of Sennacherib, that which he hath sent to blaspheme the living God. Truly Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their land ; and they have placed their gods into the fire ; for they are no gods, but the works of man’s hands, wood and stone : and these have they destroyed. And now, O Lord our God, save us, I beseech thee, out of his hands, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord God, thou alone.”

Isaiah again sent to the king, encouraging him, to resist the demand of Assyria, because the enemy would by no means enter Jerusalem, but return.

How long these negotiations lasted we know not, but long enough to prove to Sennacherib, that his design was foiled, because by scarcity of water, sickness and a terrible blast he lost hundred and eighty-five thousand men and thus he was compelled to raise the siege and return.

Arrived at Niniveh, when prostrated in the house of his idol Nisroch, Sennacherib was assassinated by his sons Adrammelech and Shazzer, who after committing this parenticide fled into the land of Ararat, and Essar-chadden, also a son of Sennacherib, mounted the throne of Assyria.

XXIII.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY. HE RECEIVES AMBASSADORS OF THE KING OF BABYLONIA.

At about that time, Hezekiah got dangerously sick and was waited upon by Isaiah, who, having no hope for the king's recovery, advised him to give his charge to his house, because he would die. Hearing this, the king wept and turning his face to the wall he prayed: "I beseech thee O Lord, remember now that I have walked before thee in truth, and with an undivided heart, and have done what is good in thy eyes."

Isaiah, retreating from the sick bed of the king saw the agony of his soul, and he returned, trying a simple remedy upon the inflammation, a lump of figs, and behold, the king recovered and in three days was able to go into the temple of the Lord.

The king of Babylon, Berodach-Chaladan, who had heard of the sickness of Hezekiah sent letters and presents to him, congratulating him upon his recovery. The king of Judah undoubtedly wishing to enter into an alliance with the king of Babylon, against the growing power of the Assyrian empire, led the ambassadors all over, showing them, how well he was prepared to resist an attack and how well his treasury was filled.

Isaiah being opposed to such an alliance reproved the king for showing them his treasury and stores. With his knowledge of the affairs of the nations around Judah, he well knew, that Assyria had reached its climax and that Babylon was ascending on the ladder of power and success, and not wishing Judah to become a tribute paying pro-

vince of any nation, he feared, that the Babylonians would in time to come, remember the spoil that could be made in Jerusalem and avail themselves of the opportunity of appropriating the same to their own good.

Based upon this knowledge he predicted, that all the kings of Judah had saved shall once be carried to Babylon and that even his successors should be court-servants to the king of Babylon.

During the years, that followed these events, Hezekiah built a new wall round Jerusalem; made the pool and aqueduct to furnish the city with water, even in time of siege and bettered the affairs of the nation in all respects.

Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years; his son Menasseh succeeded him, when he was but twelve years old.

XXIV.

MENASSEH AND AMON, KINGS OF JUDAH. FROM 3291 A. M. 597 B. C. TO 3348 A. M. 640 B. C.

Menasseh was twelve years when his father died, and he ascended the throne of Judah; his mother was a daughter of Isaiah named Chephzi-boh (I like her).

This monarch did not follow his father in virtue and faithfulness to the Lord of Israel; he restored the high places, and altars for Baal, which his father had cut down and destroyed; even in the temple of the Lord he erected an Astarte and an idol called Semel.

The prophets, among whom was Habakuk, warned the king in powerful terms, to desist from his policy and walk in the footsteps of his father, but instead of listening to them, the prophets were murdered by scores, just as in the time of Achab king of Israel; the law of Moses was suspended and despotism and idolatry reigned supreme.

Although it is recorded that Menasseh repented, after having been taken captive by the king of Assyria, who released him then, but no precise date given to this campaign it is to be supposed, that the same took place towards the end of his reign, when no time was left the king to make reparations to the breach caused the nation.

Menasseh died after an inglorious reign of fifty-five years and was buried in the garden of his own house, and his son Amon succeeded him.

But Amon being of the same stamp than his father, he heeded not the warnings of the prophets and at the end of two years his servants conspired against and slew him. The people of the land revenged the death of Amon upon all that took part in the conspiracy against him and placed his son Josiah upon the throne, when he was but eight years old.

XXV.

JOSIAH'S REIGN. FROM 3348 A. M. 640 B. C. TO 3379 A. M. 609 B. C.

Josiah did not follow his fathers policy. Whosoever was at the head of the national affairs during the infancy of the king, we know not; of the first seven years of his reign, nothing is said, so we are let to suppose, that every thing went on in the wonted manner in accordance to the policy of his father; but in the eighth year of his ascension to the throne, still a lad, guided by a regent, he began to inquire after the Lord God and the policy of his ancestor David and in the twelfth year of his reign, being then twenty years old he acted independent and introduced great changes.

He gave strict orders to remove all idols, he appointed judges to deal justice impartially; he went throughout the land and exterminated the idol worship wherever he came, executing the priests of the idols—thus purifying the land and restoring the mosaical institutions.

The temple was put under repairs by him. Chilkiyahu was the high priest. Executing the kings orders the priest found a book of law, which he ordered Shaphan the Scribe to hand to the king.

The book of the law was read before Josiah and he became greatly alarmed, on account of the punishment therein set forth for idolatry as practised by his predecessors on the throne and by the people. He sent some of his officers to inquire by the prophetess Chuldah and was

answered that the words of the law would be fulfilled, but because the king did humble himself before the Lord, the evil that will come upon the nation, will not be brought about in his days, he shall be suffered to die in peace.

Having received this answer, Josiah called a convention of the elders of Judah and Jerusalem : with them, the priests, the Levites and the assembled people he went into the house of God and standing upon his stand he read to them all the words of the law and admonishing the people to walk in the ways of the Lord, “to keep his commandments, his testimonies and his statutes”; thus he entered into the covenant of God with his people.

This renewal of the covenant took place in the eighteenth year of his reign, and the time being just proper, he ordered all the people to celebrate the Pessach feast, which was thus kept according to the words of Moses. Such a feast had not been celebrated in Israel and Judah since the time of Samuel.

In the thirty-first year of Josiah’s reign Pharaoh-nechoh, king of Egypt went forth against the Assyrian empire towards the river Euphrates, here he was opposed by the king of Judah, who in the first encounter was killed at Megiddo ; his servants conveyed him to Jerusalem, where he was entombed by the side of his sires.

XXVI.

JEHOACHEZ AND ELYAKIM KINGS OF JUDAH FROM 3379 A. M., 609 B. C. TO 3390 A. M., 898 B. C.

Jehoachez was twenty-three years old, when he was called upon to succeed his father, he reigned but three months and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Pharaoh-rechah put him in fetters at Riblah in the land of Chamath, brought him to Egypt, where he died in exile, in his place Elyakim, brother, of the dethroned king was crowned as king of Judah by Pharaoh-nechoh and his name changed into Jehoyakim.

The Egyptian king exacted a tribute of the inhabitants of Judah of one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. This tribute was paid to Pharaoh and the king of Judah taxed his subjects with the utmost severity in order to raise that amount.

Jehoyakim also did evil before the Lord, prescribed the prophets and otherwise proved himself cruel.

The prophet Jeremiah, son of Chilkiyahu, who commenced his work about in the thirteenth year of Josiah and continued the same during the following years of struggle, until the downfall of the kingdom, thus speaks of this king : “Wo unto him that buildeth his house
“ by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice ; that maketh
“ his neighbors work without wages and giveth him not the reward
“ for his labor ; That saith, I will build me a roomy house, and ample
“ chambers, and cutteth himself out windows, and ceileth it with
“ cedar, and painteth it with colours. Shalt thou reign because thou
“ strivest to exel with cedar buildings ? behold thy father ate and
“ drank, but he executed justice and righteousness, then was it well
“ with him. He judged the cause of the poor and needy ; then was
“ it well ; is not this the proper knowledge of me ? saith the Lord.
“ But thy eyes and thy heart are directed on nothing but upon thy
“ own gain, and upon innocent blood to shut it, and upon oppression
“ and upon extortion, to practice them. Therefore thus saith the
“ Lord, concerning Jehoyakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah.
“ They shall not lament for him, with : Wo my brother and Wo, my
“ sister ! they shall not lament for him with Wo Lord and Wo to
“ his glory ! With the burial of a beast shall he be buried, dragged
“ about and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”

But Jeremiah spoke in vain, the king went on his reckless way. A prophet Uriyahu, son of Shamayah, who also spoke against the government, to save his life, fled to Egypt, from there the king took him and had him executed in Jerusalem.

Even Jeremiah was often in danger of being killed, but in the face, of the enraged populace he predicted in the name of his God, that the Temple of the Lord shall be desolated, the city destroyed and the nation be carried into exile.

XXVII.

BABYLONIA SUBJUGATES ASSYRIA, EGYPT AND JUDAH.

Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, had gained such advantages, over the surrounding nations, that in the course of three years he had taken all Syria, but his further progress was checked by the babylonian prince Nebuchadnezzar, and in a battle at Carchamish, Egypt was slain, but Nebuchadnezzar could not follow his advantage, because his father had died and he had to go to Babylonia to take charge of the empire; so Pharaoh Necho remained yet for a while in the possession of Judah and part of Syria.

This was the proper time for Jehoyakim and the people of Judah, to free themselves from the Egyptian yoke. Jeremiah was strongly in favor of doing so and if required to enter into an alliance with Babylonia, the greater part of the people and many of the king's officers favored that plan, but the king refused to listen to such a proposal and when Jeremiah sent a letter to the king, explaining why he ought to do so—this letter having been written by Baruch, dictated by Jeremiah—the king threw the missive into the fire and gave orders for the arrest of both, Baruch and Jeremiah, but they were well hidden and he did not find them.

When Nebuchadnezzar had arranged his domestic affairs, he again collected a formidable army, crossed the Euphrates and overran all Syria, meeting with but little resistance. Pharaoh Necho could not assist Judah, having been weakened too much and thus Jehoyakim, forsaken by Egypt, disliked by his own subjects, submitted to Nebuchadnezzar, without even trying his fortune in one battle.

Judah was now a dependency of Babylonia, the reigning power. Jehoyakim was confirmed in his dignity and for three years he was king of Judah, under the supremacy of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia.

When about this time Pharaoh Necho in Egypt died and was succeeded by his son, Jehoyakim's hopes revived and he revolted against Babylonia. This act was firmly opposed by Jeremiah, but the king heeded not his wholesome advice, and put him in prison. Nebuchadnezzar now sent forth an army composed of Chaldees, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites (all these countries were subjected already to Babylonia) to chastise Judah.

In the forthcoming battle Jehoyakim assisted by an Egyptian army, was defeated. The Egyptians were driven back to their own country, from which they did no more return for many years. Jehoyakim fell in this battle (589) and his son Jehoyachin succeeded him, when he was but eighteen years old.

XXVIII.

JEHOYACHIN IN EXILE.

Jehoyachin reigned but three months. The army of Nebuchadnezzar made rapid progress in Judah, the fortified cities surrendered and three months after the death of the late king the formidable babylonian army besieged Jerusalem.

The new king had not changed the policy of his father and on that account could not expect any leniency from the enemy, and when Nebuchadnezzar himself came to his besieging hosts in front of the walls of Jerusalem, Jehoyachin—to save the city from destruction—went out to the Babylonian king and surrendered.

Jehoyachin was transported to Babylonia, together with his family, his principal officers, seven thousand of the citizen and one thousand mechanics ; also Ezekiel the prophet was carried with these into exile.

The gold and silver of the temple and of the kings palace was delivered to Nebuchadnezzar as a fine for the revolt.

Mattanyah, uncle of the late king, was elevated to the royal office by Nebuchadnezzar and his name changed into Zedekiah. This accomplished, the invaders evacuated Judah and order was restored, although the country bled from thousand wounds.

Of the further fate of Jehoyachin we know, that he was kept prisoner in Babylonia for thirty-seven years, until the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, released him and acted friendly to him, made him sit at the royal table and otherwise provided for him.

XXIX.

ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN. FROM 598 TO 586 B. C. FALL
OF JERUSALEM.

Zedekiah mounted the throne of Judah, a tributary king of Babylonia, when he was twenty-one years. For three years he kept his peace, but when at about that time the conquered countries of Edom, Tyre, Zidon, Ammon and Moab showed strong signs of revolt against Babylonia, also Judah was caught in that agitation, the politicians of these countries entertained strong hopes of gaining their independence. It was again the old prophet Jeremiah, who advised the king to remain a faithful subject to Nebuchadnezzar, not to enter into a league with the revolting countries and not to cause a rupture with the East. By the efforts of Jeremiah, the scheme was abandoned and Zedekiah, to avoid all suspicion went to Babel, accompanied by Elashab and Gemariah.

But the agitation had spread also to the captives, that lived in exile in Babylonia and Jeremiah sent letters to them advising them not to revolt against Nebuchadnezzar, but to remain peaceful citizens to the country of their captivity, and to wait patiently for the fall of Babylonia, which was sure to come, because this alone could secure the independency of Judah.

Jeremiah was ably seconded by Ezekiel, son of Busi the priest, who stood at the head of an israelitish colony at Al Haber in Babylonia, who also predicted the downfall of Babylonia and the regaining of Judah's independence thereby. The efforts of the two prophets were crowned with success, neither the king of Judah, nor the exiles revolted. Zedekiah returned and up to the seventh year of his reign, remained tributary to Babylonia.

At about this time the king of Egypt died, and his son who succeeded him resumed the struggle with Nebuchadnezzar, took Gaza, fought a naval battle against the Syrians and sent an army into Phoenicia.

Zedekiah, who clung with the utmost tenacity to his resolution, to love no opportunity to regain his independence, thought that the time of doing so had now come, he secretly allied himself with Egypt and openly revolted against Nebuchadnezzar. The idea, as entertained by

the king, must have been a general one, because the people at large were under arms, and were nobly determined to die, or to regain their liberty and independence.

One man alone was not carried by the current of agitation, he had no hopes for a final success and he therefore boldly denounced the alliance with Egypt and the revolt against Babylonia, it was the old patriot and prophet Jeremiah, his words spoken to the masses, were so full of truth, that he was considered dangerous and put in prison.

In the ninth year of Zedekiahs reign, Nebuchadnezzar came to Palestine to enforce obedience and although every city was fortified and well garrisoned one by one fell and on the tenth day of the tenth month (Tebeth) the hostile army appeared before Jerusalem. The king entreated Jeremiah to predict the defeat of the enemy, to encourage the besieged, but the prophet would not speak what he did not believe and was left to pine away in prison.

The siege of Jerusalem was kept up for nineteen months. The king of Egypt with an army came to assist his ally, but was defeated by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar, after which all the detached bodies of troops were concentrated before Judah's capital. The city was so hemmed in, that no provisions could be procured by the besieged, and famine and pestilence raged within the walls to an alarming extent, but no one entertained a thought of surrendering.

The city held out to the eleventh year of Zedekiahs reign, when on the ninth day of the fourth month [Tamuz] of that year, the besieging armies succeeded in taking the outer walls of the city and also Mount Zion, the city of David. Previous to the taking of which, the king and his officers and guards had fled through a secret gate and made their escape towards Jericho. Pursued by the enemy and deserted by his guard, the king was overtaken and brought before the king of Babylonia, then at Riblah. He was dreadfully punished for his revolt, his sons were killed before his face, after which he was blinded and in company with his friends he was carried to Babel, where he was condemned to die in prison.

Although the city was taken, the houses burnt and there were no hopes, still the people held out until the tenth day of the fifth month (Ab) when Nebusaradon, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, succeeded in taking the remaining portion of the city. The temple and public buildings were pillaged and set on fire, the heroic defenders, who escaped starva-

tion, pestilence and the sword of the enemy were taken captive and brought to exile to Babel. The High Priest, the commander, the kings counselors and his scribe were brought to Riblah and there executed. The vessels of the temple were also brought to Babel.

Thus the country stripped of its wealth and the best part of its inhabitants was declared a province of Babylonia and Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedalyahu, son of Achikam, as governor.

Jeremiah, was taken from his prison and also transported, but when at Ramah he was released by Nebusaradan and left the choice to either go to Babel or return, the latter of which he preferred; he went back to weep upon the ruined walls of his beloved city. His tears and sighs here were converted into the words composing the Lamentations of Jeremiah.

Gedalyayu was not left to use his influence to better the condition of his brethern, he was killed in the seventh month [Tishri] by Ishmael, son of Nathanyah, a royal descendant, together with his warriors, at Mizpah. Fearing the punishment of this dastardly deed, the people came to Jeremiah, asking whether it would not be best to leave the country, but the Prophet disclaimed such a plan, but was overruled. The remaining Israelites left for Egypt and took Jeremiah and his scribe Barach with them. They came to Daphne [Zachpanches] where they established a colony, finding already israelitish fugitives there, Many of them had also moved to Migdol, Memphis, Patros and other cities of Egypt.

Also in Egypt Jeremiah did not cease in his zeal for the cause of Israels God. When he saw his brethern incline after the egyptian idols he rebuked them severely. The much afflicted patriot and prophet died in Egypt,

BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

OF

PERIOD IV., PART I.



A. M.	B. C.		
2900	1088	Saul elected king at Mizpah.	Samuel, prophet.
2902	1086	War with Amalek. Sauls disobedience.	Samuel renoun-
2908	1080	War with the Philistines. Goliath and David.	ces Saul and anoints David.
2930	1058	Saul's death. David made king in He- bron. War with Ish-bosheth, son of Saul.	
2937	1051	David acknowledged king over all Is- rael. Makes his capital Jerusalem.	
2939	1049	War with the Philistines. David's victory.	
2940	1048	The ark is brought from Kiriath-yea- rim and placed in the city of David.	
2945	1043	War with the Ammonites & Syrians.	
2960	1028	Abshalom revolts against his father.	
2970	1018	David proclaims Salomon king over Israel	
2973	1015	Commencing the building of the Temple.	
2980	1008	Dedication of the Temple.	
3004	984	Salomon is visited by the Queen of Shebah.	
3010	978	Salomons death.	

PERIOD IV., PART II.

DIVISION OF THE NATION.

A. M. B. C.	JUDAH.	ISRAEL.	REMARKS.
3010	978 Rehoboam king of Judah. (Jehudah and Benjamin.)	Jeroboam, king of Israel. 10 tribes.	Jeroboam introduces the schism; two golden calves at Dan and Beth-el.
3015	973 Shishak of Egypt in war against Judah.		
3027	961 Abiyam king. War between Judah and Israel, the latter are defeated.		
3030	958 Assa succeeds Abiyam. Hanani prophet.		
3032	956	Nadab succeeds Jeroboam.	
3034	954	Basha succeeds Nadab.	Ben-hadad, I., king of Syria.
	War between Judah and Israel. Assa allies with Ben-hadad. Ramah is taken from Israel.		
3057	931	Elah succeeds Basha.	
3059	929	Zimri succeeds Elah; reigns but 7 days. Omri and Tibni aspire to the throne.	
		Civil war.	
3063	925	Omri, king. He kills all male issue of Jeroboam's dynasty. Tibni killed in battle.	
3064	924	Samaria, capital of Israel.	
3068	920	Achab succeeds Omri.	Elijah, the Tishbite.
3072	916	Jehoshophat succeeds Assa.	Judah & Israel unite in war against Damascus. Ben-hadad II. in Syria.
3090	898	Achazyahu.	Elisha.

A. M.	B. C.	JUDAH.	ISRAEL.	REMARKS.
3092	896		Jehoram.	
		War against the re-	volting Moabites.	
3097	891	Joram.		
		Edom gains inde-		
		pendence.		
3108	883	Achazyahu		Chazael in Syria.
		The Omri dynasty is overthrown, Jehoram		
		and Achazyahu are killed by Jehu		
3106	882	Athalia, mother of Jehu ; King.		
		the late king us-		
		urps the throne.		
3112	876	Conspiracy against		
		the queen, she is		
		killed.		
		Joash made king.		
3134	854		Jehoachaz.	Ben hadad III., Syria.
3151	837		Jehoash.	Joel ; Amos
3153	835	Amazyah.		and Hosea
		War against Edom		prophets.
		and Israel.		
3167	821		Jeroboam II.	
3182	706	Azaryah (Uzziah.)		
3207	781	Edom is again taken.		
3208	780		Anarchy.	
3220	768		Zecharyah and Shal-	
			lum.	
3221	767		Menachem.	Phul, Assyria.
			Israel tributary to	
3231	757		Assyria.	
			Peckachyah.	Isaiah, prophet.
		Jotham.	Pekach.	Rezin, Damascus.
3233	755		Part of Israel are	Tiglath Pileser
3234	754		brought into exile	Assyria.
3250	738	Achaz.	Anarchy.	
3259	729		Hoshea.	
3262	726	Hezekia.		
3268	720		Samaria is taken by Shalmanesser and	
			Israel carried into exile into Messo-	
			potamia.	

THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH AFTER THE FALL OF ISRAEL.		
A. M. B. C.		
3276	712	Jerusalem is besieged by Assyria, but is saved.
3291	697	Menasseh, King.
3346	642	Amon.
3348	640	Josia.
3352	636	
3355	633	The temple is repaired and the service therein reconstructed in accordance to the law of Moses.
3379	609	Josia opposes the Egyptian army and is killed in a battle at Megiddoh.
		Jehoachez succeeds his father, but is dethroned by Pharaoh Necho after 3 months, he is brought to Egypt, where he dieth.
3380	608	Pharaoh Necho exacts a heavy tribute from Judah, he crowned Elyakim, king over Judah and changed his name into Jehoyakim.
3383	605	
3384	604	
3391	597	Jehoyakin, succeeds Jehoyakim, he reigns but 3 months, is taken captive by the Babylonians, brought to exile with a great many Jews, amongst whom was the prophet Ezekiel; Nebuchadnezzar places Mathanyah on the throne, calls his name Zedekiah. Judah is tributary to Babylon.
3394	594	Zedekiah, seeing that the Egyptians had taken Gaza from Neb. and that sundry countries, tributary to that empire, revolted, he allied with the Egyptians, determined upon to regain Judah's independence.
3399	589	The Babylonians besiege Jernsalem.
3402	586	Nebusaraden, general in chief of Nebuchadnezzar's army, takes Jerusalem. The temple is burnt, Zedekiah is blinded, his children killed. The Jews, with the king are transported to Babylonia. Judah declared a Bab. province and Gedalyah put there as governor; but he is killed shortly after and the remaining Israelites emigrate to Egypt.

RECAPITULATION: From 2900 A. M., 1088 B. C. until 3010 A. M., 978 B. C., a period of 110 years, the nation was united under 3 kings.

From 3010 A. M., 978 B. C., until 3268 A. M., 720 B. C., a period of 258 years were two kingdoms Judah and Israel.

From 3268 A. M., 720 B. C. to 3402 A. M., 586 B. C., a period of 134 years, Judah alone existed.

All in all the nation existed 502 years, Israel had 19 and Judah 20 kings.

PERIOD V.

From the Babylonian captivity,

TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

Comprising the books of Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi.

FROM 3402 A. M. 586 B. C.
TO 4058 A. M. 70 A. C.

A PERIOD OF 656 YEARS.

BIBLICAL HISTORY.

I.

DANIEL. CHANANYAH. MICHAEL AND AZARYAH.

The Israelites, transported by Nebuchadnezzar, were chiefly brought to Babylonia, where, on the side of the Euphrates, they established colonies. Those, who were exiled there with the last transport, after the temple and Jerusalem were destroyed, found already friends and co-religionists there, and all that spoke the hebrew tongue, whether formerly belonging to the kingdom of Judah or that of Israel, united and remained so ever afterwards and are henceforth known by the name: The Jews or Israelites. Their condition in Babylonia was not a sad one, they were left to chose their vocation, many of them purchased landed property and gained wealth; in no case were they molested in their religious exercises; they could even aspire to political renown, as we see exemplified by Daniel and his friends.

Here in exile the Jews reflected upon the cause, that determined their fall; and it took them not long to know or to feel, that they had deserved such fate by forsaking the God of their fathers, that Universal God, the knowledge of whom they should impart to all nations. How little they had accomplished that mission, they now knew, the folly of idol worship, in which they were steeped for hundreds of years, now became evident to them. The more such wholesome reflections and thoughts were entertained, the purer, brighter and loftier became their ideas concerning God and Religion, idolatry was discarded and they congregated together in prayer to the Most High.

Nebuchadnezzar was not evil disposed towards the Jews, he ordered Asphenas, the chief of his eunuchs, to select of the lads, children of the nobles, that were transported from Judah, the best and the wisest and to give them a good education, that the king may make use of them, as officers, instructors etc. Among these lads were Daniel Chananyah, Michael and Azariyah, whose names were changed into : Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

The king had provided, in order that these lads should in no way be thwarted from their studies, that they should receive from the provisions and the wine as served on his royal table. Daniel and his friends begged to be excused to partake of this food or wine, because they considered it wrong, a transgression of the mosaical laws, which they were rigidly to enforce. The chief, who was placed over them was finally persuaded to grant their request, because he liked them very much, and so the four jewish lads lived in Nebuchadnezzar's palace in strict conformity to the laws of Moses.

After three years they were introduced to the king, who after a close examination of them found Daniel and his friends well qualified to enter the service of the king and were accordingly elevated to positions of eminence and trust.

Daniel in particular proved himself worthy of the confidence bestowed upon him by the king. On one occasion, when Nebuchadnezzar who then found himself on the head of the most powerful and formidable empire, was thinking of the future, reflecting upon means to so govern it, that his vast domains should for ever remain in his and his offsprings possession, he conversed with Daniel, who showed the king conclusively that the empire under its present king had gained its climax, that he alone could keep it thus, but that the successors upon the throne would prove themselves less able and thus under them the empire would diminish and finally be entirely overthrown.

In giving this opinion Daniel used the following figure. He placed before the kings view a visionary image ; its head of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver ; its belly and thighs of copper, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. A stone is hurled against this figure, not by human hands though, and the clay, iron, copper, silver and gold are chaffed together, ground and carried off by the winds, so that nothing of it remained to note the place where it stood.

The king was well pleased with the wisdom and statesmanship thus manifested by Daniel and he made him governor of the whole province of Babylon and superintendent over all the wise men of the empire. Recommended by Daniel, his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were appointed officers over the public service.

But be it remarked here, that in the year A. M. 3405 or 585 B. C. after Nebuchadnezar had captured and reduced Jerusalem he directed his columns against the other nations of Asia Minor, which one by one invaded and totally subdued. Ammon, Moab and Edom, the Arabians, the Philistines, the Sydonians and the Abyssinians, all felt the weight of his powers and became tributary to the Babylonian empire.

After the fall of ancient Tyre, Nebuchadnezar overrun Egypt and reduced that country so low, that for forty years after it lay almost desolate. Also the insult, which had been put upon him by the murder of his deputy Gedalyah in Palistine, he punished; 3418 A. M. 570 B. C. he sent his general Nebusaradon there, who traversed it to extremity, completing the desolation and carry with him 745 persons, of the chiefs of the remnant, to join their brothers in captivity in Babylon.

One year after this, 569 B. C., Nebuchadnezar found himself at the head of an empire, more extensive, than ever before obeyed the dictates of one man, he now returned to his capital, which he carefully adorned with the most curious works of art and enriched with plunder.

In this time falls the conversation referred to in this chapt. between the emperor and Daniel; for which the latter was highly lauded, and received high in royal favor. The wisdom shown by a devout son of Israel made the king reflect upon the faith of Israel and he manifested some reverence for Jehovah, the God of Israel.

II.

THE GOLDEN STATUE.

Soon after Nebuchadnezzar erected a golden statue of his father and issued a proclamation, that all his subjects should pay divine honors to it. To this edict the friends of Daniel refused obedience and they were in consequence condemned to be burnt to death.

A furnace was heated more than ordinarily and these three men were cast into it, but they were saved from such a fearful death ; additional honors were heaped upon them, after they gave their reasons for disobeying the edict, and a decree was published that every tribe and nation, that lived under the protection of Nebuchadnezzar should devoutly worship the God of Israel.

But this did not last long, soon the heart of the emperor became again swollen with pride, as he contemplated the magnitude of his possessions and the extent of his power. It is even believed, that he meditated an act of folly so extravagant as the assumption of divine honors to himself.

Thinking upon executing such designs, he one night dreamt a dream by which he became very much alarmed. Daniel was called to explain, if possible, the different figures of that dream, which he did.

The ambition of the king to carry out his idea was great, but the fear of heavenly punishment, as predicted by Daniel, should he insist, overpowered him and he desisted, but his mind was not strong enough to overcome the agitation and Nebuchadnezzar became insane. For seven years his soul was dark, the king imagined to be an animal and he crept upon hands and feet. Nebuchadnezzar recovered and publicly expressed his penitence and humility, and after reigning a few years longer prosperously, he died and left the crown to his son.

III.

EVIL-MORODOCH AND BELSHAZAR.

Nebuchadnezzar died 3427 A. M. 561 B. C. and his son, Evil-morodoch ascended the throne of Babylon. This prince did not possess the qualifications necessary to govern such a vast empire and his reign which lasted but three years, was exceedingly disastrous; jealous of the growing power of the Medes, he formed a formidable league against them, but was defeated and slain by Cyrus, then a very young man, who was the leader of the Medes and Persians.

That Evil-morodoch was well disposed to the Jews in exile is shown, by his humane action towards Jehoaquin, the king of Judah, who was still kept in prison, he released and supplied him with a decent maintenance at his court.

This monarch was succeeded by his son Belshazar a man not less weak, but by far more haughty than his father, who ascended the throne 3430 A. M. 558 B. C. and who was destined to be the last of the descendents of Nebuchadnezzar to aspire to regal honors.

On one occasion Belshazar gave a banquet, to which he invited a thousand of his chief nobles. Being very merry and throwing off all restraint, the king introduced sacrilegiously the sacred vessels from the temple at Jerusalem, which his grand-sire had taken thence and which by his predecessors were constantly treated with respect.

The hour of mid-night was come, and the voice of mirth and revelry rolled high, when the king imagined to see a human hand inscribing upon the opposite wall some characters, as it were of fire. Great was the dismay of the monarch at this interruption of the festivities, and it rose higher when none of the Chaldean scholars present could be found to decipher the hieroglyphics, which the king had seen.

In this consternation, the queen-mother, suggested to her son the propriety of consulting Daniel, the man, to whom his great ancestor had owed himself under so many obligations, and whom Belshazar had not designed to notice.

Daniel was at once summoned to the presence of the king, the characters placed before him and he stated, that the writing upon the

wall was foretelling the speedy destruction of the king. The words were hardly uttered, when a band of conspirators burst in, Belshazar was slain and his scepter quickly transferred to his relative, the king of Media, known by the name of Cyaxares or Darius, the Mede.

Belshazar had reigned but five years, his cruelty brought about the crisis, by which the Babylonian empire became part of the domains of the king of Media.

IV.

DARIUS, THE MEDE, AND DANIEL. 3435 A. M. 553 B. C.

Darius did not make Babylon his capital, but preferred his ancient residence to the splendour and magnificence of the Chaldean metropolis; so he contented himself with appointing one Nabordoricus to act as his deputy in Babylon, while he himself continued to hold his court at Echatana. But not being altogether indifferent to the prosperity of his great empire, the king divided the same into hundred and twenty satrapies, subject to the control of three presidents or chief ministers; and such was his reverence for Daniel, that he appointed him to the first rank among these representatives of the imperial majesty.

In this capacity, Daniel, the foreigner, was envied and hated by the Persian and Median nobles, and they fell upon the following device to effect his ruin.

They caused Darius to issue a proclamation, that for the space of thirty days no one should present a petition either to God or man, except to the king, on pain, of being cast, in case of conviction, into the lions den.

Daniel, as might well have been expected, paid no regard to this mandate, but repaired into his room, as he was wont to do thrice a day, to make supplication before the Most High. The envious nobles intruded upon him in his privacy and there finding him in prayer, they reported to Darius, who greatly to his sorrow, condemned him to undergo the punishment of being thrown into the lions pit.

The king very reluctantly signed the death warrant of Daniel, but was finally persuaded to comply with the letter of the law, by his

nobles and thus accordingly Daniel was thrown into the lions den ; but for some reason or other. the brutes refused to harm him, and when Darius came to lament the loss of such a worthy servant and found him still among the living, he was rejoiced, caused him to be extricated and his accusers to be thrown to the ferocious beasts by whom they were devoured.

After the deliverance of Daniel from the lions den, Darius decreed in his empire, that each and every one should reverence the God of Israel, “because he is the living God and endureth for everlasting.”

V.

BABYLON CONQUERED BY PERSIA. 3450 A. M.
538 B. C.

Darius lived after the occurrences in the previous chapter but two years ; In the years 551 B. C. he died and his nephew and son-in-law Cyrus [Keres], then king of Persia, succeeded him upon the throne of Media.

The province of Babylon, which by right of conquest and inheritance, belonged to the king of Persia and Media, now revolted. Nabordoricus, the deputy of Darius, allied with the Lydians, than in war with the Medes, threw off the yoke and sent auxiliaries to the latter.

The confederates were defeated in a great battle and after a variety of great conquests, Cyrus finally overrun Babylon and it was carried by assault.

In the second year after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, king of Persia and Media, a proclamation was issued by that monarch saying : “ Thus hath said Cyrus, the king of Persia, All the kingdom of the earth hath the Lord, the God of heaven, given unto me ; and he hath directed me to build for him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever among you, that is of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord, the God of Israel, he is the God, who is in

Jerusalem. And whosoever remained out of any place, where he hath sojourned, him shall the men of his place assist with silver, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the freewill offering for the house of God, which is in Jerusalem.”

With great joy the Jews saw, that God had at last looked upon their affliction; and gathering together to the number of nearly fifty thousand persons, they put themselves under the guidance of Zerubabel, grand-son of their late king Jehoachin, and Joshua, grand-son of the high-priest Saraiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had put to death.

To them the sacred vessels were restored, that belonged to the temple, which were carried to Babel and in the year 3452 A. M. 536 B. C. exactly 69 years since the commencement of their troubles under their king Jehoyakim, the Israelites set out to return to their native land, to re-possess it.

It is not very easy to imagine the satisfaction, which these poor exiles must have experienced, when the hills and valleys endeared to them by a thousand glorious associations once more opened to their view. They spread themselves, few as they were, over their ancient possessions; applied themselves diligently to the rebuilding of their houses and cities; and at the end of seven months returned in a body to Jerusalem, where around its ruins several of the great festivals were held. This was followed by a general collection of funds, the preparation of materials and the enrollment of workmen; and in the following year the foundation-stone of the second temple was laid.

VI.

THE SAMARITANS.

For a time the re-building of Jerusalem and the temple went on in good spirit, but the zealous workmen had not made much headway, when the Samaritans, that mongrel race, which Shalmanasser planted in the room of the ten tribes carried by him in the captivity, applied for permission to join them in the holy work, under the pretense, that the God of Israel was equally an object of worship to them, as to the Jews.

Zerubbabel though would by no means accede to the proposal, Such individuals of the ten tribes, that lived among the Samaritans, who would repair under his standard, he would gladly receive; but to treat the Samaritans as legal heirs to the divine promise he would not consent and these were therefore refused to join in the building of the house of the Lord.

The consequence of this refusal soon became visible; the Samaritans from that hour became bitter enemies to the Jews; and they placed all obstacles in the way of the workmen, they could. Although they would not venture to disobey the edict of Cyrus by openly opposing the progress of the work, they nevertheless prevailed upon his ministers, by bribes and iniquitous representations, to throw a variety of impediments in the way; and so the building went on for several years slowly and painfully.

It excites no wonder, that such could have been done under the monarch, who showed himself so friendly to the Jews, as to release them from exile and furnishing the returning people letters of recommendation, when we take into consideration the many wars and conquests of Cyrus, which detained him for most all the time abroad. But still as long as this king lived, the opposition to the building could only be done covertly, but when Cyrus died 3459 A. M. 529 B. C. other and more effectual means seems to have been adopted to thwart the designs of the Jews.

The successor of Cyrus upon the throne of Persia, Media and Babylonia was Cambyzes, during his reign, seven years and four months, the building of the temple at Jerusalem was entirely interrupted. But when Darius Hystaphes ascended the throne of Persia, orders were issued to prohibit all further interruption of the building.

In consequence of this proclamation the work was resumed with fresh vigour and in the sixth year of Darius' reign, 3472 A. M. 516 B. C., the temple was so far advanced, that divine worship could be held therein.

Zerubbabel was still governor and Joshua, high-priest, when the above act occurred and they celebrated the feast of Pessach, on the fourteenth day of Nissan, in the new house of the Lord with great joy and gladness.

But again the Jews were troubled by the Samaritans, they refused to pay the tribute, imposed upon them by Cyrus, on the plea, that the temple was now completed. Zerubbabel proceeded to the court of Darius and soon returned with a fresh mandate, that the tribute must be paid until the outer works were completed. After this the work went on smoothly, and long before Darius paid the debt of nature, the second temple was finished and dedicated to the service of the Lord Most High.

VII.

AHASUERUS. 3511 A. M. 477 B. C.

Darius died 3505 A. M. 485 B. C. and was succeeded by Xerxes of whom little or no notice is taken in scripture, but of whom is related, that he confirmed to the Jews all the privileges granted to them by his father.

Xerxes was followed on the throne by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 3511 A. M, 477 B. C. This monarch is supposed to be the one mentioned in the scripture by the name of Ahasuerus, in whose time falls the history of Esther and Mordochai.

This monarch was very successful in several conquests and in the third year of his assumption of the regal power, he repaired to his capital Susan or Shushan, where, to celebrate his triumphs he gave a great feast to his nobles, which, if record is true, lasted one hundred and eighty days.

At the expiration of these feastings he opened his palace garden to all his subjects and gave them a feast of seven days duration. When at the concluding of this feast, the king was very merry and in the height of his intoxication, he ordered his queen Vashti to appear before his guests "ornamented with the royal crown, to show the people and the princes her beauty; for she was handsome in appearance.

The queen, considering such a step derogatory to her honor as a female and a kings consort, refused to obey the king's order.

Ahasuerus was too indignant at what he considered an encroachment upon his territory to make allowance even to the prevailing custom of his own country, which vindicated the refusal of Vashti, but he forthwith deposed the queen and advised by his noblemen, foremost among them was Haman, he gave orders, that from all the provinces of his empire the most beautiful virgins should be assembled at Shushan, in order that a successor might be chosen to fill the queenly station.

By far the loveliest of all females introduced to the notice of the king's chief Eunuch was a Jewish maiden, Hadassah, niece of Mordochai, a Benjamite, who had been brought hither with the captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar of Jerusalem. Father and mother of Hadassah were dead and Mordochai had adopted her.

This maiden, whom the Persians called Esther, (star), made so deep an impression on Ahasuerus, that he selected her, in preference to the rest to be his wife. The nuptial feast was celebrated with great pomp. Under advice of her guardian Esther did not reveal to the king her Jewish descent; and for some time this remained known only to her and Mordochai.

Mordochai, who held an humble office about the court, once overheard two of Ahasuerus' officers conspire together, to assassinate the king, he communicated this fact to Esther, who in Mordochai's name told it to the king. The matter was investigated and proved to be true, the conspirators were executed and the matter was put on record in the annals of the Persian empire.

VIII.

HAMAN'S ELEVATION; ITS CONSEQUENCES.

Among the nobles in Ahasuerus court was one, Haman, an Amalekite, who became a great favorite of the king, so that he was raised to a position higher than that of any noble man in that vast empire. This man, like other favorites of oriental princes, was in the habit of receiving the most abject flattery from those around him, they all bent their knee and knoeled before him whenever and wherever he made his

appearance. Mordochai alone refused to so humble himself before Haman, because he would only bent his knee before the Eternal.

The fury of Haman rose to the highest pitch, when he discovered, that Mordochai could not be prevailed upon to follow the example of the crowd. To sacrifice the guilty individual was not vengeance sufficient for such an affront as this, and when Haman was told, that Mordochai was a Jew, he determined to exterminate the whole nation.

On one occasion, when Haman was with the king, engaged in revelry and mirth, he thought the time come to execute his design. By a series of false representations and the promise of a rich spoil, he prevailed upon the king to sign and seal a proclamation, ordering his subjects to rise against the Jews on one day, the thirteenth of Adar, to kill them, men, women and children and to enrich themselves with the spoil taken from the doomed.

“The runners went out with all speed with the king's decree, and the law was given out in Shushan the capital ; and the king and Haman sat down to drink ; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.”

As soon as this tremendous edict became known, the Israelites were everywhere affected with the deepest sorrow. Mordochai went about the court in sack-cloth and ashes. The queen, on hearing this, about her guardian, sent word to him, to know why and wherefore such manifestations of sorrow and affliction. Mordochai sent a message to the queen of all what Haman had done, procured a copy of the decree, commissioned the messenger to hand this to Esther with the request to appear before the king and prevail upon him to annul this cruel mandate, by which her nation was doomed to utter destruction.

Esther, on hearing this sad news returned answer to Mordochai, that it was law that whosoever should appear before the king, without being called would die and she had not been called these thirty days ; but Mordochai returned a missive, that it was her duty to intercede with the king in behalf of her race, even at the sacrifice of her own life, closing with the words : “And who knoweth whether thou hast not for a time like this attained to the royal dignity.”

The queen could withstand no longer and she ordered Mordochai to assemble all the Jews in the city, they should fast and pray for three days, on the third day she would proceed before the king at the peril of her own life.

On the third day Esther put on her royal apparel and appeared before the king in the inner court. Contrary to all her expectations she was graciously received and encouraged to name her request, which should at once be fulfilled. The queen demanded, that the king and Haman should honor her with their presence at the banquet, which she had prepared for them. The invitation was accepted and orders sent to Haman to hurry him into the queens palace.

At this banquet, when the king was happy, he again asked of Esther to let him know, what urgent matter had brought her to his presence, upon which she answered, that to morrow at the banquet, to which the king and Haman were invited, she would name her request.

Departing the pride of Haman received, as may be imagined, a ten-fold increase in consequence of the honors lately conferred upon him : and his rage against Mordochai became proportionably violent, when that person refused even to salute him as he past. He hastened home and at the suggestion of his friends he at once ordered a gibbet to be erected in the yard, thereon he would suspend the dead body of his enemy, as soon as the new day should dawn.

IX,

HAMAN'S FALL.

When Haman arrived at court, to have the warrant signed by which Mordochai was to be executed, he was told, that the king passed a sleepless night and had ordered his attendant to read for him some events out of the annals of the Persian empire.

It just so happened, that the reader read the proceedings of the conspirators, whom Mordochai overheard and exposed, and the king was in the act of accusing himself of inattention of his duty in having failed adequately to honor the person, whom he was indebted for this important service, when Haman was introduced to his presence.

The king at once requested his favorite to give him an idea, how he could honor a person, to whom the king owns a debt of gratitude.

Haman, nothing doubting, that he was himself the individual to whom the king alluded, advised, that the highest marks of royal approbation should bestowed upon such a trusty servant; "Let them bring a royal apparel, which the king hath worn, and a horse, on which the king had ridden, and let there be placed a royal crown upon his head. And let the apparel and the horse be given into the hands of one of the kings princes, of the most nobles, that they may array the man, whom the king desireth to honor and let them cause him to ride on the horse through the streets of the city and proclaim before him: Thus shall be done to the man, whom the king desireth to honor."

The mortification of Haman must have been great, when the king approved of his plan and commanded him to carry out his suggestions to the letter in favor of Mordochai, the Jew, who sits under the gates of the court. The kings command was not to be trifled with and so Mordochai was arrayed in royal apparel, a crown placed upon his head and upon the kings horse he was led through the streets of the city by Haman, who proclaimed: "Thus shall be done to the man, whom the king desireth to honor."

But the performance of this task, irksome as it was, proved but the commencement of Haman's troubles. He was scarcely at home, to seek consolation amid his friends and the members of his family, when he was called to repair to the banquet of the queen, to which he was invited.

When at this banquet the king demanded from Esther, to tell him of her request, she availed herself of the occurrence of the morning to plead the cause of her persecuted kindred: "For we have been sold, I and my people to be destroyed, to be slain and to be exterminated and if we had been only sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I would have remained silent; for the adversary regardeth not the damage of the king."

So effectually did Esther expose the treacherous plan of her adversary that the king saw in a moment into his designs, and finding upon inquiry that "An adversary, and inimical man is this wicked Haman"; his rage was great indeed, and when a servant stated to the king, that Haman had erected a gibbet in his yard for the execution of Mordochai "who had spoken well for the king," a decree was at once issued to suspend him thereon.

Thus Haman suffered the fate which he had intended for Mordochai, his children were killed or sold as slaves, his house razed to the ground and all his offices were transferred upon Mordochai.

X.

PURIM.

Although Haman was executed and Mordochai raised to high honors, for Esther had told the king, that she was a jewess and the niece of that person, but still the danger was not entirely removed.

The austere laws of the Medes and Persians admitted of no repeal; a decree issued by the king under his hand and seal, could no more be revoked, thus the subjects were still advised to exterminate the Jews on that certain day and to enrich themselves with their spoil.

In this dilemma Esther and Mordochai again supplicated the king, who gave them permission to issue a proclamation to the Jews, signed and sealed by the king, by which they were permitted to resist every attack made upon them by the subjects of the emperor.

The satrapies of the empire on hearing the high honors bestowed upon Mordochai, the Jew, by the king, and being notified of the new mandate, assisted the Jews in the hour of danger against any one who should rise up against them, so that the day which was destined to see the extermination of the Jews was changed into a holy day to be celebrated with feastings and rejoicing.

When these exciting days were past and peace restored to the empire, Esther and Mordochai sent letters of congratulations to all Jews, requesting them to observe these days (14 and 15 of Adar) as holy days: "Like those days whereon the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was changed unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a feast day; to make them days of entertainment and joy, and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the needy."

The name of this feast, proposed by Esther and Mordochai, and accepted by the Jews, was put down as Purim (lot), because when the superstitious Haman had already gained the sanction of the king for his designs to exterminate the Jews, he caused his servants to draw

lots, and in this manner he would determine upon month and date to execute his wicked design.

This action on Haman's part gave the name of the feast.

Of the final deeds of Mordochai we only know that : "Mordochai the Jew was the second in rank after king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and acceptable to the multitude of his brethern, a promoter of good to his people, and speaking peace to all his seed."

XI.

EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

The temple at Jerusalem was concluded and dedicated to the service of the Lord, the city itself was rebuilt, but had no fortifications, walls, in fact the jewish colony was in anything but flourishing circumstances, the Samaritans were still bent upon mortifying them where—and whenever they could.

Some 58 years after the completion of the temple, in the year 3530 A. M. 458 B. C. under the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus the colony at Palestine received a fresh support from the remaining exiles.

Ezra, an offspring of the priestly family of Ahron, renowned at court as an able and zealous expounder of the law, was awarded the privilege to proceed to Jerusalem to assist his brethern, a letter of recommendation was given to him by the king, and his counselors at the same time contributed freely and plentifully towards endowing the house of God in Jerusalem. With a new colony of over 1700 men, without the women and children, Ezra departed and soon arrived at Jerusalem.

Arrived here with his intentions principally to re-generate the mosaical institutions, to install judges to deal justice impartially, Ezra must have felt downcast upon seeing the colony in such a dilapidated condition, as it was then in. The colonists had married heathen-women and became, if not heathen themselves, but very lax in the exercise of the law. A counsel of the nobles was convened and the matter investigated, and finally resolved to declare all such marriages, entered into in direct opposition to the laws of Moses, as null, void and illegal. A mass-meeting of the people was called and convened at Jerusalem ; here

Ezra rebuked them severely for committing such vile transgressions against God and his law and notified them of the resolution as past by him and the nobles, that whosoever should fail to come up to the requirements of the same, should act in contradiction thereto and remain in such illegal marriage, should lose his rights and privileges in the colony. A committee of the nobles was appointed, headed by Ezra himself, to investigate each case separately and see to it, that the new covenant as now concluded should be kept up. So zealous were these nobles in their efforts in behalf of God and his law, that within three months the work was finished, the strange wives, which were forbidden by Moses in matrimony, were sent off and provided for; the Jewish colony was cleared from the influence of heathen example.

Ezra now went to work and copied the law of Moses; out of his hands very probable the same went forth in the form we have it still. A society, in after years known by the name "The great Synode" whose members were mostly men of learning, of wisdom and fidelity to the law of God, who are in later times known as "the men of the great Synode" is also supposed to have been called into life by the zealous Ezra. It was the paramount duty of these members to spread the knowledge of the law, by distributing copies from which every one could draw water from the ever living well.

Some fourteen years afterwards in the year 3544 A. M. 444 B. C. Ezra received a most powerful and valuable support in his zealous endeavors to regenerate the Jewish nation. Nehemiah, son of Chachalyah, butler of the king, while at the capital Shushan fulfilling the requirements of his office at court, heard from a man of Judah who had returned, that the colony at Jerusalem was in a state of misery and disgrace, that the walls of the city were torn down and the gates burnt. Hearing the sad news Nehemiah mourned and wept at the sorrowful fate of his brethren. When he next appeared before the king, his downcast appearance was noticed and inquired into by his august master; upon which he made answers: "May the king live forever, why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers sepulchres lieth ruined, and her gates are consumed by fire." The king kindly granted Nehemiah's request, to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls, he also gave him letters of protection to his governors beyond the river and letters to his overseers of the forests to provide him with the necessary wood.

Nehemiah at once started towards Jerusalem, arrived, he with but few men, surveyed the sunken walls. Aroused by the energy of the man the people began the work with a will, and in spite of all the obstacles placed in their way by the Samaritans, Sanballat the Chornite their governor, Tobiyah the Anonite, his servant and Geshem the Arab, the work was finished in 52 days, the work was commenced on the 2nd day of Ab, and was completed the 25th of Elul.

Early on the first day of Tishri a convention of all the people, men, women and children was held, upon a public square in Jerusalem. Ezra read the law till noon, and because his voice could not be heard everywhere, some noble men and Levites volunteered to repeat his words to those who stood too far off from the principal reader. Up to the 29th of the month the reading was continued, the law expounded; the feast of booths was celebrated; on the 24th the people united to a national day of repentance and avowed their firm determination now and always to faithfully adhere to the laws of Moses, as read and expounded by Ezra.

In order to bring the city again to its former splendor, Ezra and Nehemiah proposed and the convention ratified the resolution, that all the nobles had to make their permanent homes at Jerusalem and from the colonists the tenth part, to settle there voluntarily or to be drawn by lot.

Ezra and Nehemiah may be considered as the regenerators of the new colony; with all their efforts they worked to re-establish the service of God according to the law of Moses, and their endeavors were crowned with success; the law became national property, national books, from which every one could draw the whole Jewish economy.

The society, of which we spoke above, assisted the leaders in spreading the law and exacting its obedience and they inaugurated many, and most wisely calculated institutions. The sanctity of the Sabbath was enforced; justices were installed who had to keep sessions on Mondays and Thursdays of every week, market days, on which the country people flocked into Jerusalem to sell and to buy, and to further profit by the concourse of people in these days it was legislated that the priests and levites, must read to the people some portions from the books of Moses, in order to spread the knowledge of these sacred writings.

Twelve years Nehemiah remained at Jerusalem and at the head of the government of the colony ; in 3556 A. M. 432 B. C. he returned to Persia ; eight years afterwards in 3564 A. M. 424 B. C. he again asked permission to go to the holy city, where he found the colony somewhat in disorder and used all his efforts to right it again.

A powerful co-operator Ezra and Nehemiah found in Malachi, the last prophet in Israel. Those three men united their endeavors to crush idolatry and so successfully was this accomplished, that hereafter paganism, schisms and dissensions from the mosaical institutions were no more tolerated nor never thought off ; the books of Moses were considered holy and the truths therein exemplified, were looked at as of divine origin and thus obeyed. In this period the wise men began to collect the extant writings of the prophets and historians and to expound and to explain these versions was now their chief effort. These explanations were not written down, but transmitted orally, by tradition, from generation to generation.

XII.

SAMARITAN TEMPLE ON MOUNT GERIZIM.

We have seen that the colony settled in Samaria, the former capital of the kingdom of Israel, engaged a priest, whose home was Bethel, to teach and expound to them the law of Moses, but their heathen and pagan inclinations were not at all given up ; in the course of time they became a mixture of Judaism and paganism.

When the Jews returned from Babylonia and commenced to re-build the temple, the Samaritans considering themselves as belonging to the Jewish nation, came and asked to be permitted to assist in the erection of that house of God, but were refused. The Israelites could no more reconcile with paganism. From this time forward, the Samaritans strained all efforts to check the further design of the people. As we have seen they caused, by misrepresentations on the court, the work to be postponed for some years ; but when the work was resumed and the workers were protected by the king, they mocked and scoffed at the efforts

of the people, finally they were compelled to pay a tribute towards the erection of the temple and the walls of the city.

Being succumbed by the government they submitted with no good feeling. The breach between the two colonies though was not large enough to prevent an intercourse between them. The Jews had intercourse with them, even Menasse, grand son of the high priest Elyashib, had married the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of the Samaritans.

When Ezra and Nehemiah took hold of the government of the Jewish colony all such marriages were declared illegal and wrong and whosoever would not at once separate himself from such wife was declared as having no part on the God of Israel, nor any right in the colony. There were undoubtedly many who preferred to rather remain in union with their heathen women, than to become a co-operater in the work of regeneration of Israel. Among these was Menasse the, son-in-law of Sanballat. Being a member of the priesthood Menasse had his apartments with the rest of the priests in the temple; but Nehemiah did enforce the law and Menasse was deprived of his privileges as priest and he himself cast out of the temple.

Thus cast forth Menasse went to his father-in-law to Samaria. Sanballat, in order to provoke the Israelites still more, had a temple built on the mountain of Gerizim, something similiar to the one in Jerusalem and ordained his son-in-law to ministrate therein. This temple on Gerizim caused the breach between the two colonies to become so great that it was irreparable, the hatred between the two neighboring colonies increased with every day.

This Samaritan temple became also an injury to the Jewish colony, because the members of the latter, who were not satisfied with the reforms and regulations as instituted by Ezra and Nehemiah, left their brethern and moved to Samaria, where they connected themselves with the Samaritan colony.

XIII.

THE JEWISH COLONY UNDER PERSIA.

From 3452 A. M. 536 B. C to 3656 A. M. 332 B. C.

The Jewish colony remained under Persia for upwards of 204 years; they remained unmolested; their affairs were entrusted to a high-priest, who in connection with the Society of priests and noble-men, of whom we have spoken under Nehemiah, under the name of the men of the great Synode, regulated their religious ceremonies, dealt justice and tried to better the condition of the colony both spiritually and materially.

The high-priests who followed each other in succession in that time were: Joshua, Yoyakim, Eliyashib, Yoyada, Jonathan and Jaddua.

Of Jonathan the following facts are recorded. He had a brother named Jesus who was a friend of Bagoses a general in chief of the Persian army. By some means this Jesus had prevailed upon Bagoses to confer upon him the office of high-priest in place of his brother. Being once together in the temple the two brothers quarreled about the matter and Jesus was slain by the hands of Jonathan.

Bagoses upon hearing that his friend Jesus was slain by the hands of his own brother, the high-priest in office repaired at once to Jerusalem, polluted the temple and punished the Jews by levying a heavy tax upon them for seven years.

After the death of Jonathan his son Jaddua succeeded him as high-priest.

XIV.

ALEXANDRE THE GREAT AND THE JEWS.

In the time of Jaddua the high priest, Alexandre, the Macedonian, afterwards called "the great," made war against Darius, king of Persia, and in a subsequent battle the army of Darius was slain, the king him-

self fled into Persia, while his mother, wife and children fell into the hands of Alexandre. Besieging Sidon and Tyre Alexandre sent word to the Jewish high priest, that the colony should send him some auxiliaries, provisions for his army and that they should now transfer the presents, which they had formerly sent to the persian court, to him ; in fact he advised them to break their allegiance with the Persians and submit to him. To this missive Jaddua made answer, that they had sworn to Darius not to raise arms against him, and that, as long as Darius was in the land of the living, the oath as sworn was binding to him and the colony.

When Alexandre heard this answer he grew exceedingly angry at the Jews and determined upon to make an expedition against them in order “ to teach all men through them to whom they must keep their oaths.”

When Tyre was taken and the vanguard had settled his affairs in the newly conquered land, he directed his steps towards Palestine, besieged Gaza, took it and made all possible haste to come to Jerusalem to execute his vengeance upon its colony and its high-priest.

Jaddua, being told of the doings and the determination of the Macedonian was greatly alarmed, he ordained a public fast day, on which the people should join with him in supplication, that the Lord should deliver them from harm. This done, and hearing that Alexandre with his hosts was not far from Jerusalem, Jaddua raised a procession of Priests Levites and the people to meet the dreaded foe. The high-priest himself was clothed in his purple and scarlet attire, with the mitre on his head, with which was connected the golden plate resting upon his forehead, whereupon were engraved the words : “Kodesh ladonoi” holy to the Eternal ; the attending Priests and Levites were attired in fine white linen.

At a place near Jerusalem called Sapha, both parties met. Alexandre on seeing the procession went forth and, contrary to the expectation of all those that followed him, saluted the high-priest and adored the name that official bore on his fore-head.

Surrounded by the priests Alexandre entered Jerusalem, went to the temple and there offered sacrifices under the direction of the high-priest. The colony now being considered a Macedonian province, the representatives were convened and Alexandre in promising them his

good intentions towards them, requested them to ask a favor of him. They requited him, that he might let them practice the rights of the religion of their fathers and release their taxes in the seventh year [Shemittah,] all of which he graciously granted. Being petitioned he granted the same privileges to the Jews, living in Babylon and Media.

The Jewish colony thus kindly treated by the much dreaded vanquisher, immortalized this event by ordaining, that every male child born in that year should be named Alexandre.

XV.

PALESTINE UNDER EGYPTIAN RULE.

FROM 3687 A. M. 301 B. C. TO 3785 A. M. 203 B. C.

When Alexandre died his domains became divided. Syria with Palestine were taken by Laomedon, while Egypt was seized upon by Ptolomaus Lagi. Continual wars were kept up between the possessors of the different provinces, by which the cities suffered greatly and lost many of its inhabitants.

Ptolomaus Lagi overrun the domain of Laomedon and in 315 B. C. he seized upon Jerusalem on a Sabbath day and declared it an Egyptian province. Many Jews were transplanted to Egypt, Lydia and Cyrene, where the vanquisher gave them citizen rights, whenever they had subscribed to the oath of allegiance, so that many followed their transported brothers voluntary.

Palestine remained under Egypt under Ptolomaus Philadelphus, Evergetes and Philopator.

It is supposed that Ptolemaus Philadelphus instituted the first translation of the Sacred Writings into Greek. This version is known by the name "the Septuaginta."

Under Evergetes the Jews at Jerusalem were headed by a high-priest named Onias, who was a very avaricious man. The king not being able to collect from him the yearly tribute of twenty talents, threatened with severe measures, but was appeased by a nephew of Onias, Joseph, and desisted from his plans.

Philopatro, once in Jerusalem, wished to gratify his curiosity, to enter the inner chamber of the temple, the holy of holies; all entreaties of the high priest availed not, he forced his way, but fainted at the entrance. To revenge himself the king, upon his return to Alexandria, decreed, that those only could have citizen-right, who pay homage to the idols of the country. Of those who remained faithful to the faith of their fathers he took the greatest portion, brought them upon a public place, which was enclosed for the purpose and then ordered to let loose upon them scores of elephants; but the animals became wild broke the enclosure and, instead of the culprits, hundreds of the spectators were trampled to death. Philopator now gave up his design and granted to the Jews again the same privileges as before.

The jewish colony had suffered greatly under Egypt, the continual wars depopulated the cities and country places; when now Antiochus the great 203 B. C. entered upon war with Egypt and was victorious in sundry battles and when upon seizing Judea, he came upon Jerusalem, the senate of the colony came out and acknowledged him as their sovereign.

XVI.

THE COLONY FROM

3785 A. M. 203 B. C., to 3813 A. M. 175 B. C.

Antiochus the great granted the Jews many privileges, he was well disposed towards them, he even issued a proclamation forbidding any of his subjects to enter into the temple, or to bring to Jerusalem those animals, or the flesh of them, which were considered unclean and therefore prohibited by the mosacial economy.

But when in 187 B. C. Antiochus was assassinated, the war commenced again: Syria and Egypt both claimed Judea, and fought for it, by which the colony suffered much.

The high-priests in this period were: Simon, the just, who was the last member of the great synod, Eleazer, Menasse, Onias II. Simon II. and Onias III.

By having of late come in contact with so many foreigners, it is not to be wondered at, that the colonists began to show signs of cultivating the philosophy which thus was brought to them; the evidence of which is proven by the works that were written in that time. Jesus Sirach wrote a book containing practical knowledge and proverbs. A grandson of the author translated this work into the Greek tongue, (131 B. C.) Another book written at the time shows still more signs of the influence of the Grecian philosophy on the minds of the Jews; it is the book of wisdom, written by a Jew in Egypt.

Of the great teachers living then, we make mention of Antigonus of Socho, and his scholars Zadok and Boethus.

The war between Syria and Egypt ended in the defeat of the latter empire; in consequence thereof Judea remained a Syrian province.

XVII.

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, MATHATHIAHU.

In the year 3813 A. M., 175 B. C., Antiochus Epiphanes, also called Epimanes, (the foolish) ascended the throne of Syria. Jason, brother of Onias III. had purchased the office of high-priest of the Jews, from the king. This functionary used all his influence to induce the people to accept Grecian culture, and Grecian customs; but after three years Jason was deposed by his brother Menelaus, who offered the Syrian king 300 talents more for said office, and, who furthermore promised to introduce the Grecian religion. So Menelaus succeeded his brother, and his claims were supported by the court.

To pay the promised amount to the king, Menelaus took all the treasury, the vessels of value from the temple, and when Onias III. rebuked him for thus outraging the sanctuary, the high-priest had him killed.

All the men of Jerusalem were agitated by such a dastardly act, and when about at that time a rumor circulated that Antiochus was killed in Egypt, they arose against Menelaus to depose him. Jason came with 1000 men to assist the people and re-enter upon the functions of the high-priesthood, but the rumor proved to be false; Antiochus still lived, and with a powerful army he seized upon

Jerusalem, killed about 40,000 men, enslaved probably as many and pillaged the temple.

Jason fled into Arabia, from thence to Egypt and died in Lacedaemonien. Acknowledged by the king, Menelaus resumed his functions as high-priest, and Philippus, a captain of Antiochus' army was made governor of Jerusalem.

The misery to which the Jews had been subjected until now, was but easy to that which was in store for them. When for the fourth time Antiochus went forth against Egypt, but was compelled to desist on account of the interference of the Romans, he sent his general-in-chief, Appolonius, with 20,000 men to Jerusalem, who killed many of the inhabitants, pillaged the city, burnt part of it and placed a strong garrison into the ford.

But Antiochus was still not satisfied. He was of opinion that he could not retain Judea as long as the Jews would be permitted the free exercise of their religion; he therefore issued a decree forbidding the service in the temple. The obedience to the law of Moses was punished with death; the scrolls found were torn, and everywhere idols and altars were raised. Jews were dragged to these altars and compelled to either sacrifice—thus renouncing their allegiance to the law of Moses—or to be killed. Many did renounce their religion for fear of life, but, also many others suffered martyrdom, rather than to forsake the faith of their fathers. Of the last, we make but mention of Eleazer, an aged man of seventy years, who was placed upon an iron roast, fire kindled under him, and he thus perished; and a mother with seven boys who rather saw them all cruelly murdered in her presence than to forsake their religion.

The public reading of the books of Moses being forbidden under penalty of death, the people read, instead of this, such portions of the prophets and other sacred writings, which, in their estimation had some bearings upon the prescribed portion of the law, which they were prohibited to read. These portions were called Haphtorahs, and they were retained ever afterwards.

Mathathiahu, a priest, from the family of the Hasmoneans, who had retired with his family to private life into Modains, was fully determined to remain true to his faith; this determination was also subscribed to by his five sons: Johanan Gadi, Simon Thasi, Judah Maccabbi, Eleazer Haoran and Jonathan Haphus. A Syrian captain

entered Modains, erected an idol altar and ordered the Jews to go and sacrifice. Mathathiah slew the first Jew that came to the altar, and while his sons fell upon the Syrians he tore the altar down. This done, Mathathiah with his family and many Jews who would not renounce their religion, fled into the desert.

The prescribed fugitives were not idle; they often sallied forth from their hiding places, entered cities and villages, tore down the idol altars and restored the service of God. Copies of the law were written, and by them distributed, so that they, though few in number, were making themselves a name. By and by, Mathathiah's party increased and the insurrection became general.

When, shortly thereafter, 3822 A. M., 166 B. C., Mathathiah died, he stood at the head of a little army of men who were determined to restore their religious freedom or die in the attempt. At his death-bed the dying patriot admonished his party to remain true to the cause of Israel, and after having placed his son Judah Maccabbi at the head of the force, he expired.

XVIII

JUDAH MACCABBI AND JONATHAN.

From 3822 A. M., 166 B. C. to 3845 A. M. 143 B. C.

The forces which Judah commanded were but small, but what they lacked in numbers, they made up in courage. In several open battles the Syrians were slain, although they outnumbered the Jews by far. At Mizpah a battle was fought; Judah had but 6000, the Syrians 40,000 men; but the Jews fought like heroes and the Syrians were routed. Such gladdening tidings increased Judah's army daily. In the next battle at Bethsur the Jews were already 10,000 against 65,000 of the enemy. This battle won, Judah marched to Jerusalem, and after several combats he took the capitol, without the ford, cleansed the temple which was polluted by Antiochus, fortified it and re-dedicated it to the service of the Most High in the month of Kislaw, 3824 A. M., 164 B. C.

Judah now entered into an alliance with the Romans; but in 161

B. C. he lost battle and life in a combat against Bakchides. From him the family derived their appellation, the Maccabbeans.

Antiochus died 163 B. C.; he had heard of the victories achieved by the Jews, and was on the way to Judah to make, as he said, out of Jerusalem one great grave for all its inhabitants, but did never reach his voyage's end. Antiochus Eupator mounted the throne of Syria, and looking upon Menelaus as the prime cause of all the disastrous campaigns of late years, the king ordered to take that high-priest prisoner and decreed his execution in the ash tower of Beroea.

Antiochus Eupator ordained Alcimus high-priest of the Jews and had him installed in his office by a force of a Syrian army.

Jonathan succeeded his brother Judah as the leader of the patriots; he renewed the alliance with the Romans.

The claimants to the throne of Syria were many, and the land was greatly troubled by the constant feuds of the different claimants. These troubles Jonathan used to his advantage, and when the young king Antiochus Theos was acknowledged legal heir to the throne, Jonathan received his ordination as high-priest of the Jews.

But Tryphon, the guardian of the young king, himself aspired to the Syrian throne, and he therefore planned means and ways to dispose of the legal heir. In order to aim at the king he must do away with his friends, and to begin with, he invited Jonathan friendly to visit him at Ptolomais because he wished to transfer the city into the hands of the Jews. No sooner was Jonathan in the city when Tryphon seized upon and had him killed.

XIX.

SIMON THE FIRST INDEPENDENT RULER OVER THE JEWS.

From 3845 A. M. 143 B. C. to 3852 A. M. 136 B. C.

When the Jews heard how treacherously Tryphon had acted against Jonathan, they fell off from him and concluded articles of peace with

Demetrius Vicator who then was a foe of Tryphon; they had also elevated Simon, brother of Jonathan as their high-priest.

In 143 B. C., Demetrius, in order to more firmly attach the Jews to himself and his government, and thereby securing their assistance in the strife he was engaged in, he made a covenant with Simon, by which he acknowledged him as an independent ruler of the Jews and their high-priest, and further promised in a document, never to exact any tribute from them.

This covenant was ratified by the Jews, in a convention of Priests, the nobles, and the elders. Simon was installed as ruler and high-priest and ordained that his offsprings should be the legal heirs to this office. A copy of this covenant was transmitted to Rome, and the Senate acknowledged the Jews as an independent nation, and Simon their ruler.

Simon compelled the garrison, still in the ford at Jerusalem, to evacuate; he fortified the temple mount, took the fortress Gaza, re-established a port at Joppa and thus gained peace for his people, who were a tribute-paying province for upwards of 445 years. A new era commenced in Judea. Simon coined his own money.

But Simon was not left to enjoy his new dignity for a long time; his own son-in-law, Ptolomhy, who was governor at Jerico, aspired to become ruler of Judea and assassinated him at a public dinner, 136 B. C.

Before we now proceed to relate the following events of the Jews, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the parties that had arisen among them.

The constant intercourse with the heathens on the one side, and the religious persecution to which they were exposed, which naturally causes a firmer and closer adherence to the religion, on the other side, influenced the opinions in matters of religion to a great extent. One party principally remained true to the faith of their fathers, strictly adhered to the essence and doctrines of the mosaical law, but they favored the gradual and systematic amalgamations with the Grecian forms and customs, thus giving up those peculiar Jewish forms and customs, by which they were separated from the people around them. A second party thought it necessary to retain those olden forms intact, in order to forever save the Mosaism from Grecian influence. A third party walked between those spoken of above.

Thus we find towards the close of the Hasmonian wars three parties among the Israelites. 1st, the Pharisees; 2d, the Saduzees, and 3d, the Essenians.

The Pharisees (*perushim*) wished to retain Judeaism in its peculiar and ancient form; they considered the oral traditional law just as binding as the written law. They believed in angels, in the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead. Seven castes of Pharisees were counted.

The Saduzees favored Grecian philosophy. They claimed to have been started by Zadok, scholar of Antigonus, of Sacho. The tradition was not binding to them; they denied the existence of angels and also the immortality of the soul. They disowned all new developement of the law. They claimed that because man is free and therefore responsible for all his actions, and because this responsibility ceases with the death of man, the human judges have to keep man upon the path of virtue with the utmost severity. They discarded polygamy.

The Essenians, who had their principal stations by the Dead Sea, taught immortality of the soul, but no resurrection of the dead. They were a kind of communistic society; they swore no oath save the one by the initiation into the order and were opposed to matrimony. On entering, the member received an ax, an apron and a white garment, symbols of work, simplicity and cleanliness. The whole society consisted only of men.

Besides these parties we have to make mention of an institute which was called into life, probably under Simon. The great Synod was long dissolved; we have found that Simon the just was one of its last members; to expound the law, and to deal justice, the people organized a Synedrion. The presiding officer of this body was called *Nasi*; the next dignitary after the *Nasi* was the chief-justice in all civil cases.

XX.

THE JEWISH TEMPLE IN EGYPT.

Many Jews had made Egypt their permanent home, where they were left to enjoy their religious liberty and had otherwise been

granted all the rights and privileges of the Egyptian citizen. Many of them, no doubt, came to Jerusalem, at least once in a year, to sacrifice in the temple.

When Onias, son of the high-priest Onias III, who aspired to the high-priesthood, after the death of his father, saw that Alcimus was installed as such, and inaugurated by a Syrian army, he gave up all hopes of ever attaining to that dignity and went to Egypt, where he soon, with another Jew, Dositheus, was elevated to the highest dignity of military career, he became general-in-chief of the whole Egyptian army under the king Ptolomæus Philometor 150 B. C.

To the king, who was well disposed towards him, he once stated, that it would be good policy for him to build a temple for the Jews living in Cyrene and Egypt, similar to the one at Jerusalem, so that they need not go to Jerusalem, there to sacrifice. The king was well pleased with this statement and gave him permission to build such a temple near Leontopolis, in the province of Heliopolis. This temple finished, Ptolomæus ordained Onias as high-priest to minister therein.

XXI.

JOHANN HYRKAN AND JUDAH ARISTOBUL.

From 3852 A. M. 136 B. C. to 3884 A. M. 104 B. C.

Although Ptolomy had assassinated his father-in-law in order to become ruler in Judea, he was not left to enjoy that privilege; a son of Simon, Johann Hyrkan was elevated as ruler and high-priest.

The beginning of Johann Hyrkan's reign was not at all prosperous. The Syrians overran Judea, besieged Jerusalem and compelled Hyrkan to deliver up his stores of war implements, to take down the walls of the capitol and to pay a tribute. But when soon after, the Syrians were engaged in a war and weakened, Hyrkan not alone regained his independence, but increased his power; he had gained for Judea nearly its former boundaries. He took several places beyond the Jordan, also several cities that were still kept by the Syrians; he conquered the Samaritans, destroyed their temple upon the Mount Gerizim, compelled the Idumeans to accept the Jewish laws, and laid the city of Samaria in ruins.

With the Romans he renewed the alliance.

Hyrkan was a stout adherent to the Pharasean ideas, but being once insulted by that party, he forsook them and became a member of the Saduzees. Hyrkan had five sons: Aristobul, Antigonus, Alexandre, one whose name is not mentioned, and Absalon; he died in the year 3883 A. M. 105 B. C.

Before his death, Hyrkan had willed, that his wife, Salome Alexandra should be ruler in his place, and his son Aristobul high-priest.

Aristobul not satisfied with the arrangements made by his father, usurped the title of king, appointed his brother Antigonus as co-regent, imprisoned his brethren and his mother; the latter died from starvation. Antigonus, a valliant man, conquered the Etureans and compelled them to accept Jewish laws, but the queen Alexandra intrigued against him and had him killed. Aristobul died in 109 B. B. greatly troubled by the torments of his conscience.

XXII.

ALEXANDRE JANAI.

From 3884 A. M. 104 B. C. to 3910 A. M. 78 B. C.

After the death of the king, the queen released the imprisoned brothers of Aristobul, of whom Alexandre Janai was called upon the throne. This monarch was cruel; one of his brothers he killed; the other, Absalon, he allowed to retire as a private man.

Alexandre wished to increase his domains by taking Ptolomy, belonging to the Syrians, but the inhabitants called the king of Cyperia, Ptolomy Lathyrus, to their assistance, who came with about 30,000 men and sieged over Alexandre's army, after which he committed unheard of cruelties upon the Judeans, but he was compelled to evacuate because an Egyptian army came to assist Alexandre.

The city of Gaza had sided with Lathyrus and Alexandre after having treacherously obtained admission into the city had all its inhabitants killed. This cruel act which the people ascribed to the king's Saduzean inclinations, caused an agitation among the subjects which ended in an open revolt. On the feast of Booths, when the

king, acting as high-priest, was just in the act of placing a sacrifice upon the altar, the people began to throw at him with pomegranates, used insulting language against him, and made him understand that they wished his abdication; but he ordered his soldiers to disperse the people and some 6000 men fell victims to this attack.

Engaged in a war with the Arabians, his adversaries instigated the people to revolt against him, and a revolution of six years duration was the result; at the end of which the king overpowered the revolutionists. Eight hundred of them Alexandre had on one day fastened to crosses and in their sight he gave the orders to kill their wives and children. Towards the end of his reign the people looked upon him with more favor because he had then enlarged his domains.

Alexandre died in the year 79 B. C.; he left two sons, Hyrkan and Aristobul.

Of the men of renown living then, we mention Jose, son of Joesser and Jose son of Jochanan who deserve great credit for what they have done in regard to the education of the people. Later than these were Joshua, son of Perachia, and Nitai the Arbeli. A scholar of Joshua was Simon, son of Shetach, who, although being brother-in-law of the king Alexandre Janai, who was a stern adherent to the Saduzees, used all his influence to have the Saduzees excluded from the Synedrion; he instituted a very careful examination of witnesses. A cotemporary with Simon was Judah son of Tabbai.

XXIII.

ALEXANDRE, HYRKAN II., ARISTOBUL II. POMPEJUS BESIEGES JERUSALEM.

From 3910 A. M. 78 B. C. to 3925 A. M. 63 B. C.

Alexandre Janai previous to his death advised his wife, Alexandra, to make her peace with the Pharisees, because with the aid of that party alone, which was then already a most formidable one, she could succeed him on the throne. Alexandra obeyed this wholesome counsel—she made her peace with the Pharisees, and, supported by that powerful party, she reigned nine years. She made her son Hyrkan, who was a man of little energy, easily led and submissive, high-priest. The kingdom, being now supported by the Pharisees, began

to persecute the Saduzees, and chiefly those who had advised the former king Alexandre to crucify the 800 participators of the insurrection.

The prescribed party though were not so easily to be set aside; they had gained a powerful ally in the person of Aristobul, the second son of Alexandra. When his mother once got sick he instituted a revolution. With money and troops he was well supported and soon he was proclaimed king. At that period Alexandra died and Hyrkan was announced king at Jerusalem. The contending kings, although brothers, each provided with an army, engaged in war. In a battle near Jericho Hyrkan's army was slain and he compelled to make a compromise, by which he was to retire into private life, while his brother became king and high-priest.

Now Antipator, an Idumean, who was by Alexandre Janai placed as governor over Idumea, who supported the claims of Hyrkan, was of course disposed of by the new king. This Antipator, feeling sore about the new government, induced Hyrkan to seek protection and support by Aretas, king of the Arabs then at Petra. This plan the deposed king accepted. Aretas supported the claims of Hyrkan as king of the Jews, collected an army, came to Judea, fought a battle in which Aristobul's troops were defeated and then besieged the latter who had withdrawn into the temple at Jerusalem.

At that time Pompejus, a Roman, was in Armenia 65 B. C., he ordered one of his generals Scaurus into Syria, who, bribed by Aristobul, compelled Arestas to raise the siege. When in the year following Pompejus himself came to Damascus, both contending kings visited him to support their respective claims; also a delegation of the people waited upon the powerful Roman with the request to assist them in discontinuing the kingdom and give them in return the constitution which they had under Simon and Johann Hyrkan. Pompejus promised to investigate and settle this affair as soon as he was done in Armenia.

Aristobul, fearing the decision to be not in his favor, began to collect his forces, preparatory to resisting the same. By so doing he was lost. Pompejus had heard of Aristobul's efforts, and when the Romans had taken Petra, they entered Judea, besieged Jerusalem, which they took after a siege of three years, (in 63 B. C.) on the day of atonement, at which occasion over 10,000 Jewish warriors with

their families were killed. Pompejus entered the all-holy with all due reverence, the treasury of the temple, valued at 2000 talents he did not touch.

The conqueror took Aristobul, his two sons Alexandre and Antigonus and his two daughters prisoners and conveyed them to Rome. Judea he made to an Ethnarchy dependent from the province of Syria, and Hyrkan he ordained to be high-priest of the Jews and Ethnarch of Judea. Thus it came to pass that by the quarrels of two brothers, Jerusalem was taken and the people lost their independence.

XXIV.

HYRKAN II. HIGH-PRIEST AND ETHNARCH.

From 3925 A. M. 63 B. C. to 3944 A. M. 44 B. C.

Although Hyrkan was high-priest and Ethnarch, he was well satisfied to ministrate in the temple, while Antipater reigned in his name, who, by many contrivances gained for himself the good will of the Romans.

On the way to Rome, Alexandre, son of Aristobul fled, and soon again he came to Judea, where he collected a considerable force with which he entered upon to re-take the possession of his father. Gabinius, who was then the Roman governor of Syria, opposed Alexandre's forces, over-powered them and re-took the leader, who was saved and released only by the petition of his mother. Gabinius thought himself justified in dividing Judea in five separate governments, the seats of which were respectively in Jerusalem, Jericho, Gadara, Amathus and Sephorus. Judea robbed of its unity remained so up to Caesar's time.

Also Aristobul fled from Rome with his son Antigonus (56 B. C.), came to Judea and entered upon the struggle against the Romans, but was over-powered by Sixena, son of Gabinius, taken captive and with his son again sent to Rome. Also Alexandre appeared again but could not succeed.

Crassus, successor to Gabinius, in 54 B. C. came to Jerusalem,

took from the temple a lump of gold, and besides, perjuring himself he also took the remaining treasury of the temple valued at 10,000,000 talents. Crassus died a few years afterwards in battle. His successor, Cassius, had to renew again the struggle with Aristobul's party, whom he finally routed.

By Caesar, Aristobul was released and received two legions with which to re-conquer Judea, but he was poisoned and his son executed by order of a court martial in 19 B. C.

Meanwhile Antipater reigned in the name of Hyrkan, and having aided Caesar powerfully in his war with Egypt, gained for himself the appointment as governor of all Judea, while Hyrkan was retained as high-priest with the promise that this office should ever remain hereditary in his family. Caesar at the same time gave Antipater permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which lay in ruins since the taking of the city by Pompejus and gave them their former constitution, 47 B. C.

Antipater placed his oldest son, Phasael as governor in Jerusalem, and Herodes his second son in the same capacity to Galilee. The latter was greatly troubled by robbers who congregated in caves, and, bound to exterminate them, he went forth against, captured many and had them killed by his own authority.

He was accused of overstepping the prerogatives of his office by adjudging criminals, who ought to have been arraigned before the tribunal at Jerusalem, and for that reason he was summoned to appear before the Synedrion. He came, not like an accused, but attired in his purple mantle, surrounded by a strong body guard. The Synedrion, presided over by Hyrkan, fearing the consequence of the proceedings against Herodes, adjourned the tribunal and meanwhile let the accused disappear, who, angry at the whole procedure, collected an army and marched towards Jerusalem. He was only persuaded to desist from his plan by the petitions and requests of his father and brother.

In the year 3944 A. M. 44 B. C., Caesar was assassinated; Cassius came to Syria and exacted from Judea a tribute of seven hundred talents of silver.

Antipater was assassinated by Malich, who in return was killed by Herodes. Although the party of Aristobul had suffered many defeats,

they nevertheless revived again and recalled Antigonus, who came, but was soon driven out of the country by Herodes.

Of the men of renown of that time, who took a prominent part in the Synedrion, we mention Shemayah and Abthallion, who, according to tradition were proselytes and decendants of the king Sennacherib.

XXV.

ANTIGONUS IN JERUSALEM. THE LAST OF THE HAS-MONIANS.

After the death of Cesar, Marcus Antonius was entrusted with the government of the Orient. Entering upon the discharge of his duties 41 B. C. he was beset by complaints against Phasael and Herodes; but rather than investigating the matter, he considered the complainants as insurgents and elevated the brothers to a higher office, ordering at the same time, that those provinces which Gabinus and Cassius had taken should again be united to Judea.

While Antonius was whiling his time away in Egypt in revelry and opulence, the Parthians overran Syria. Antigonus, son of Aristobul, never for a moment giving up his claims upon Judea, now thought the time had come to gain his desired end. He promised the Parthians 1000 talents and 500 virgins, if they would assist him in attaining his father's inheritance. They promised to do so, took Jerusalem, captured Hyrkan and Phasael, delivered them up to Antigonus, who was then proclaimed king 40 B. C. To make Hyrkan incapable of ever officiating as high-priest again, the new king ordered to have his ears cut off. Phasael committed suicide in prison.

The reign of Antigonus did not last very long. Herodes went to Rome and supported by Marcus Antonius and Octavius he was declared king of Judea by the Roman Senate. Having gained this he returned, and, aided by the Romans, he took Joppa and other cities, married in Samaria Marianne, daughter of Alexandre, the Hasmonian, grand-child of Hyrkan and Aristobul, marched towards Jerusalem which he took after besieging it fifty-five days. Many of the inhabitants were killed. Antigonus was bound to a post and

beheaded; he was the last of the Hasmonians; that family had reigned 120 years.

The government of Judea now was transferred to Herodes an Idumean, born by an Arabian mother, and by him to his descendants.

XXVI.

HERODES THE GREAT.

From 3951 A. M. 37 B. C. to 3985 A. M. 3 B. C.

In order to perpetuate his dynasty, and instigated by his unprincipled, and wicked sister Salome, Herodes acted fiend-like towards the family of Hyrkan and even towards his own. His brother-in-law Aristobul, the old Hyrkan, his mother-in-law Alexandra, two of his wives and three of his sons: Aristobul, Alexandre and Antipator, he had killed.

Herodes tried all his efforts to retain and if possible to increase the favor of the Romans towards him, and he was successful therein; he was well liked by Antonius and Augustus. From the latter he received again the fortresses Gadara, Hippo, Samaria, Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, Straton's Tower, Trachonitis, Batauea, and Hauranitis, which on former occasions had been taken from Judea.

Herodes being a great friend of building, he erected in Jerusalem a theatre and in front of the city an amphitheatre; he introduced Roman plays and Roman customs; this incensed the people so that once ten men conspired against and resolved to kill him and his family; but on being discovered were executed; they, the people, seized upon the discoverer of the plot and tore him to pieces; but by his care and forethought during a draught and a failure of the crops, he somewhat regained the favor of his subjects.

He built the cities of Sebasta and Caesarea Palestine, and several other cities received beautiful buildings and fortifications. The people which began to disapprove of the useless squandery of the national treasury, he appeased by remitting unto them one-third of their taxes and repairing and beautifying the temple of Jerusalem in unheard of splendor,

Herodes died in the-seventieth year of his life 3 B. C. He had ten wives. His remaining sons were: Herodes the older, Archelaus, Antipas, Herodes the younger, Philippus and Phasaël.

He left a will, by which his domains were divided in the following manner: Archelaus should be king over Judea and Samaria; Antipas, ruler (tetrarch) over Galilee and Berea; Philippus over Gaulonitis, Trachonitis and Paneas, his sister Salome he bequeathed with domains and coined money and made provisions for all his relatives. This will of Herode's was ratified by Augustus and altered in but one instance, Archelaus should instead being called king, bear the title tetrarch.

The two principle teachers of this period were Hillel and Shammai. Hillel, a patient, generous and humane man, taught rather the spirit than the word of the law. Shammai was just the contrary. At this period falls the introduction of the following customs: If a man wished to enter upon the functions of teacher, rabbi, after he went through a course of study in one of the existing schools, and otherwise had been found worthy for such office, three renowned teachers placed their hands upon his head; this was called "Semicho."

The condition of the people under Herodes was by no means prosperous. Although the temple was beautifully restored, still the service therein had lost its significance. It was not conducted in conformity with Jewish laws. The king ordained high-priests without investigating their capacity, or even without considering their lineage; the Synedrion being neglected, he alone gave laws, created tribunals and judges according to his pleasure.

The people, discontented, displeased and in a continual state of mental excitement divided themselves into three parties. One adhered faithfully to the law and united with the Rabbines, Hillel and Shammai being then at their head; a second party "Zeelotes" favored the restoration of a strictly Jewish kingdom; they revolted constantly and ruined the land; a third party at last considered the kingdom of God,

which the prophets had predicted near at hand. Herodes and Simon members of this party claimed to be saviors, but they soon disappeared. In this period falls the birth of Jesus, son of Maria, born at Nazareth, whom the Christians consider to be the true Savior.

XXVII.

ARCHELAUS, PHILIPPUS, ANTIPAS, HERODES AGRIPPA I.

From 3985 A. M. 3 B. C. to 4032 A. M. 44 A. C.

Archelaus reigned over Judea and Samaria with but little moderation; he was barbarous and tyrannical; in several instances he openly violated the laws of Moses, so that in the tenth year of his reign the people would bear his barbarity no longer and accused him before Augustus, emperor of Rome. Archelaus came to Rome, and, convicted of grave misdemeanors in office, and for that reason banished to Vienna, a city of Gaul; his province, Judea and Samaria, was united with Syria and a Roman governor set over it,

The duty of the governor was to collect the taxes, to maintain order, to prevent insurrections; the governor had also the judiciary power in his hands; all officers, even the high-priest was by him appointed, so that the latter dignity was no more of much account. The succession of these Roman governors were: Caponius, M. Ambivius; Annius Rufus, Val. Graties, Pontius Pilatus. The last one named was accused of misdemeanors and injustice and banished; he committed suicide.

Philippus reigned in his domains 37 years. He died 35 A. C. without heirs, whereupon his land was united with Syria. He was a wise and virtuous man.

In the year 37, Agrippa, son of the murdered Aristobul, grand-son of Herodes the great, received the appointment as king over the domains of the deceased Philippus by the emperor Cajeus Caligula; he was a mild and generous, but a licentious man. When Antipas heard of the elevation of Agrippa, he, instigated by his wife, also started towards Rome to solicit the kingly title, but accused by Agrippa of having conspired with the enemies of Rome, he was dethroned, banished to Lyon, a city of Gaul, and his domains were given to Agrippa.

Caligula, in a fit of insanity. demanded that his statue should be placed into the temple of Jerusalem and receive divine honors, but petitioned by Agrippa, he desisted from this idea.

Agrippa, for some services rendered to Claudius, when the latter mounted the throne of the Caesar's, received also the kingdom of Judea and Samaria, so that in 41. A. C. the land was again united under one king, exactly as in the times of Herodes the great. A younger brother of Agrippa, Herodes, received Chalcis in Syria.

Agrippa erected the third formidable wall around Jerusalem; he beautified the city by laying out pleasure-grounds, building theatres, amphi-theatres and halls. He died in 44 A. C., leaving besides his brother in Chalcis, a son Herodus Agrippa II., who then was 17 years old, and two daughters, Berenice and Drusilla.

Hillels house had the control of the principal schools. Simon, son of Gamaliel, grand son of Hillel, called "glory of the law," was austere in matters appertaining to the law, but he also had a mind for Grecian philosophy, science and art. His school to which the most important tribunal was attached, was transferred to Jamnia (Jabne). In this time falls the translation of the five books of Moses into the Chaldean tongue by Onkelos, a scholar of Gamaliel; as also a Targum of the prophets by Jonathan, son of Uriel, scholar of Hillel; as also the beginning of the Kabbalah, a mystic philosophical treatise on God and creation, which was transmitted to but the best and ablest scholars and to them only in profound secrecy.

XXVIII.

AGRIPPA II. TROUBLES IN JUDEA.

From 4032 A. M. 44 A. C. to 4051 A. M. 63 A. C.

At the death of his father Agrippa II. was in Rome and yet too young to be entrusted with his father's domains, so Judea and all the countries belonging thereto were again united with Syria, governed by governors and Herodus of Chalcis was made high-priest in Jerusalem.

The people of Judea having suffered much for the last years by the continual change of rulers, and the wars, were very unruly and the governors placed over them increased their distemper by injustice and barbarism. Under Caspius Tadas (43-46) under Tiberius Alexandre (46-47) and under Ventidius Cumanus (48-53) they revolted and conspired against the Roman Powers, but were always defeated.

In 53 Agrippa II. received the domains of Philippus, part of Galilee with the cities Tiberius, Tarichala, Julias, and fourteen villages, in lieu of which he had to disclaim the domain of his uncle Herodus of Chalcis.

The governor of Judea from 53-60 was Claudius Felix. By his doings the hatred of the people against the Romans was increased to a great extent. It was by the instigation of Felix, that robbers came to Jerusalem under the pretext of attending divine service in the temple and there assassinated Jonathan who was the high-priest he also established a secret police force whose members were called Sicarii (men with daggers) who stabbed each and every one they thought suspicious. In Cesaria the Jews and Greeks quarreled about the mayoralty; this quarrel ended in a war in which the Greeks were beaten, but Felix sided with the besieged and gave them satisfaction. All these doings excited the people to such an alarming extent, that even Festus, who succeeded Felix in 60 could not do anything, besides the time was not granted him to better the affairs of the people, because he was recalled in 63.

XXIX.

THE ROMANS TAKE JERUSALEM. THE TEMPLE IS
BURNT. THE JEWS ARE TAKEN CAPTIVES AND
CRUELY TREATED.

4058 A. M. 70 A. C.

Festus was followed in 63 by Albinus who was a self-willed and cruel man under whose sway the troubles increased rather than diminished. Under the successor of Albinus, Gessius Florus, the troubles incensed the people and they instituted an open revolt.

When under Gessius Florus, the citizenship was denied to the Jews at Cesarea, Palestine, and some 50,000 Jews killed at Alexandria partly by the Romans, then the hatred knew no bounds, and from revolt they entered upon war. The Syrian governor Cestius Gallus, accompanied by Agrippa II. marched into Judea, but was signally defeated,

Now then the revolution spread throughout the land. The most important forts were given into the hands of men who were well tried and found worthy of trust. Joseph, son of Mathias, (afterwards called Flavius Josephus) a man of great knowledge and learning, a renowned historian and general, was placed over Galilee where he raised an army of 200,000 men, fortified and otherwise prepared the cities to sustain a siege.

Juan, the governor of Jerusalem, repaired the fortifications of the city and the temple; had weapons manufactured, and ordered all the male population of the city to drill upon a free place, thus to befit them for the coming events.

Vespasian, a Roman general, now appeared with the determination to crush the rebellion, but seeing that it ceased to be such, being now a war, bloody and long, he marched first with his 60,000 (67) to the province of Galilee, and one after one he took all the fortified cities. 40,000 Jews were slain and 1,200 taken captives; among the latter was Joseph the governor. Joseph predicted Vespasian, that he will be the next emperor of Rome, and when such became true, Josephus was released, but remained with Titus.

Vespasian conquered Galilee, the eastern countries of the Jordan, but being proclaimed emperor by the army. he went to Rome leaving the further struggle to his son Titus.

Meanwhile the inhabitants of Jerusalem were not harmoniously united; they were separated into three parties of whom Eleazer, Johann of Gishalo and Simon, son of Giora, were the respective leaders. These parties were in constant fight with each other, united only to repulse the attacking enemy, but besides these spurious moments no unanimous action existed. Thus Titus had comparatively an easy work.

After a bloody campaign the city was taken and on the ninth day of Ab the temple was burnt. On the seventh day of Elul the Romans were masters of the whole city which they ruined entirely.

It is estimated that in this combat 1,000,000 Jews were killed and 97,000 captivated. To understand this it is to be remembered that the siege lasted several months, and that the Jews who came in great numbers from the country to celebrate the passover could no more go out, because they were hemmed in by the besieging forces of Titus.

The fate of the prisoners taken in Jerusalem was very sad; part of them were sold as slaves, some compelled to do heavy public work and others were kept to fight with wild beasts for the gratification of the Romans. Of Jerusalem nothing remained but the western portion of the city walls, a portion of the temple wall, and the three highest towers Phasael, Hippikos and Marianne.

In 72 and 73 also the Alexandrian temple was ruined. All of Palestine now belonged to Rome, and the Jews were ordered to pay the taxes, which were levied upon them for their temple, towards the support of the temple of Jupiter at the capitolius at Rome.

The Jews now had no fatherland. For the second time they had to live in exile. They lived in Judea 606 years. Agrippa II. lived in Rome, so did Josephus Flavius, who was highly honored by the emperors, Vespasian, Titus and Demitian; after his death they raised him a monument.

XXX.

GENERAL REMARKS.

We have seen that Ezra and Nehemiah, were at the head of the Jewish colony in its youth, 3530 A. M. haveing instituted sundry regulations regarding the religious observations. The erection of synagogues must have been known already in these times, probably long before, but the usage to read and to expound therein portions of the Pentateuch of the five books of Moses on certain appointed days of the week is ascribed to Ezra. In Judea they read the Pentateuch through in three years once, for which reason the Masora had divided the same into 153 Sedarim or portions; our division in 54 portions of a more recent date.

The reading of these portions was conducted in the following manner: On a Sabbath, seven, and other days from three to eight members of the congregation were called upon by an officer of the Synagogue and they read out of a correct scroll of the law, that portion allotted to them. In a much later period, when all the members were no more able to read the scriptural text it was ordained that one man should read for them, the calling upon them was retained, but the reading of the members was dispensed with. An exception was made by a boy, who, on attaining his thirteenth year, was for the first time called upon, he had to read either the whole or a portion of the Sedra.

When in the time of Antiochus Epiphanus the scrolls were burnt and the reading out of them prohibited by penalty of life, some portions of prophets were read in the place of the Pentateuch (Haphtorah), the reading of which has been retained ever afterwards.

But soon it became evident that the people did no more understand the language of the bible (Hebrew), the Chaldean tongue was predominant even before the time of the Maccabbies. In order not to lose with the language also the spirit of the bible, the Synagogue engaged men, called Methurgeman, who had to translate the Hebrew into the living tongue, either verse by verse or portion by portion in the hearing of the assembly. These translations were called Targumins. In a later period Targumines were written down and the oral translation discontinued.

The usage of reciting prayers in the Synagogue was introduced by men of the great Synod. By them also the time was appointed, when the prayers should be said, viz: three times in a day, in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, the hour corresponding with the one when the usual daily sacrifice was offered in the temple at Jerusalem, at the same time they introduced grace before and after meals.

Besides the Synagogue or prayer-house, nearly every city had one or more schools. Bote Medroshim, where young and old assembled to listen to the lectures of the teacher; the subject of their lectures were to teach and expound the sacred writings.

The learned men were divided in three classes. 1. Sopherim, scribes who furnished copies of the law and commentaries; as members

of the Synedriou they were called Chachamim; 2d. Rabanim, teachers, who publicly lectured and expounded the law, and 3d, Talmidim, scholars, who after having reached maturity in age or learning were called Chaberim, associates of the wise.

The Rabanim followed sundry vocations in life, in order to support themselves, some were public officers, some merchantmen, some tradesmen, and many of them day laborers.

In order to regulate the festivals, the Rabbins closely observed the changes of the moon and notified the people by special messengers. In places where these messages could not appear in time, outside of Judea, the doubtful new month days were doubled, as also the festivals, with the exception of the day of atonement.

The Israelites in Judea and on the Euphrates were mostly agriculturists, those in Egypt, Minor Asia, and Greek were merchantmen.

XXXI.

SOME REMARKS CONCERNING THE JEWS WHO LIVED OUTSIDE OF JUDEA BEFORE THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Many Jews lived in the parthien empire; Mahardea and Nisibus were mostly inhabited by them. Two brothers, Asinai and Anilai, first weavers then leaders of a band of robbers, were called to court by the Parthien king Artaban (41). Asinai was made governor of Mesopotamia, and having been poisoned, his brother Anilai succeeded him, who engaged in a war with the son-in-law of the king, the Satrap Mithoidat, whom he took prisoner and stripped of his clothes, riding upon an ass, he brought him to the Jewish camp.

Mithradat soon freed himself and renewed the combat. The army of Anilai was routed and he killed by the Babylônians, who then fell upon the peaceful Jewish settlements and killed many. The remaining Jews left for Seleucia, where they lived in peace for five years, but were then massacred and driven out by the Greeks and Syrians. According to Josephus about 50,000 of them lost their lives

there. From Parthia the Jews settled in Adiabne, a country in Assyria and in Osroene, province of Mesopotamia.

The king of Adiabne Izates, his mother Helene, his brothers and relatives became members of Judaism about 47 A. C.; his successor was his brother Monobaz.

In Egypt lived over one million of Jews. They lived principally in Alexandria, where they supported themselves by mercantile pursuits and trades. Under emperor Caligula some animosity arose between the Jews and the aborigines, which was increased by the Roman governor Flacaus. Agrippa favoring the Jews had Flacaus exiled to Andros, where soon after he was killed; but peace between the contending parties was not restored, it was only after many years, when both parties were tired of the continual combats, that they resolved to send an embassy to Rome to the emperor, requesting him to settle the point in question. Apion, an enemy of the Jews, went on the part of the Alexandrians and Philo, an eminent philosopher, on the part of the Israelites. The emperor received Philo with an ill will in ill-humor, his clients were mocked and scoffed at. No decision was rendered.

In all parts of the Roman empire were already Jewish settlements; in the capitol, Rome, lived about 8,000 who had their own jurisdiction. Augustus favored the Jews, but Tiberius and Claudius did not and they suffered outrages under the two latter emperors.

From Rome and Italy the Jews settled in Gaul and Spain.

THE END.

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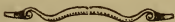
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To the Patrons of the Biblical History.

With the present volume containing the narrative of the gigantic death-struggle of Israel, falls the curtain over that last drama of blood and devastation, closes the history of Judea as a nation, and with it, closes the task I had imposed upon myself. It has been my original idea to annex to the present work a synopsis of the post-biblical events; but I have been deferred from executing this plan after mature deliberation. The history of the grand mission imposed by the Almighty upon Israel, scattered over all the quarters of the globe, the history of the wonderful preservation of our people amidst so many painful trials, so many intense sufferings, cannot be done justice to in a few short chapters. Ere long, a Post Biblical History will appear, with the help of God, bringing down the history of our nation to the present date.

Taking now leave from the numerous patrons of the Biblical History, I choose this opportunity to express to them collectively my hearty thanks for the generous support and kind sympathy extended to me during the publication of the work just completed.

If, while perusing the glorious history of our nation, only the heart of *one* of the sons or daughters of Israel has beaten higher and a more intense *Jewish* feeling been awakened, it will have more than amply rewarded.

THE AUTHOR.

Biblical History,

BY

E. EPPSTEIN,

Rabbi of Bne Jeshurun Congregation,

PROPRIETOR AND PUBLISHER,

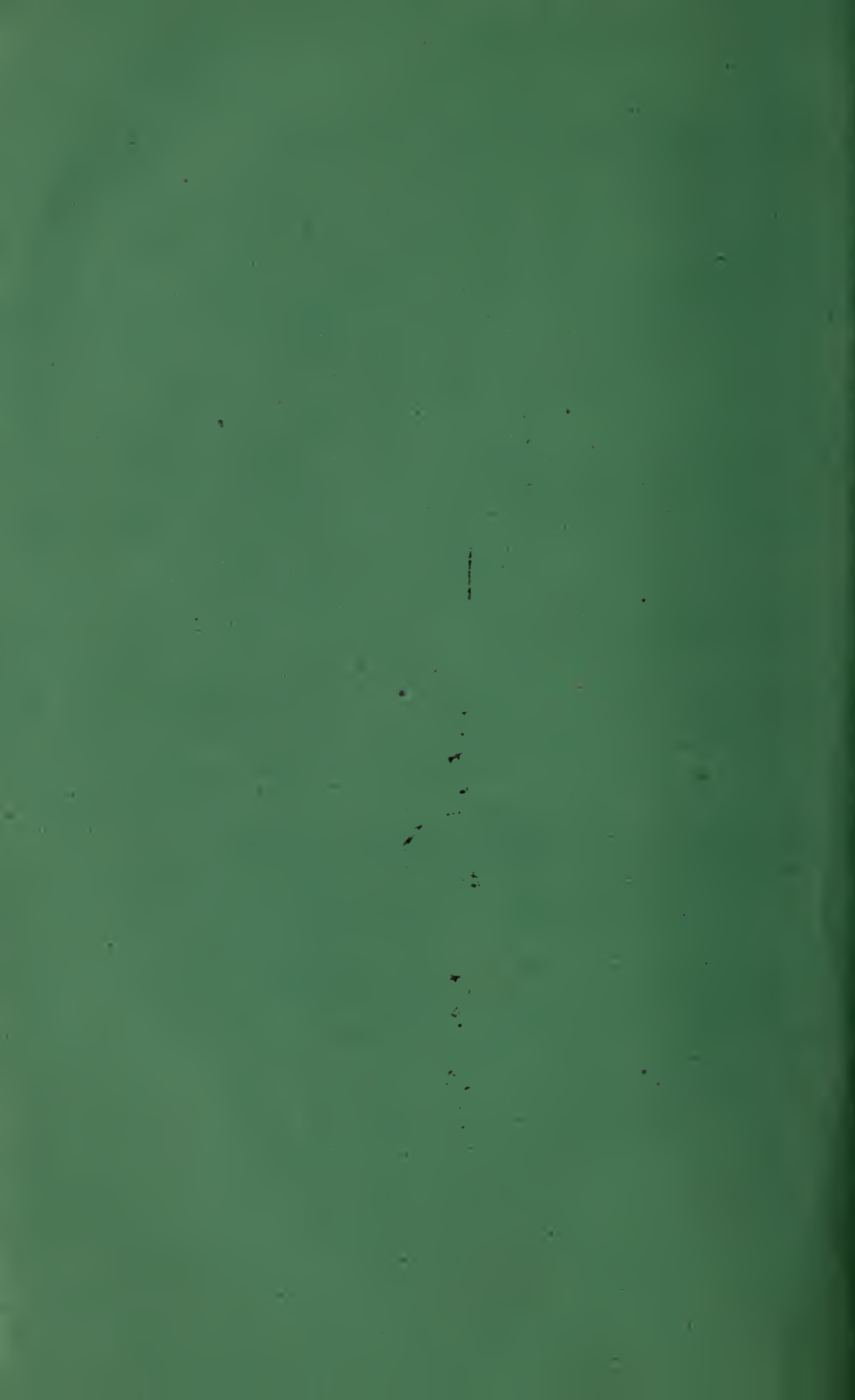
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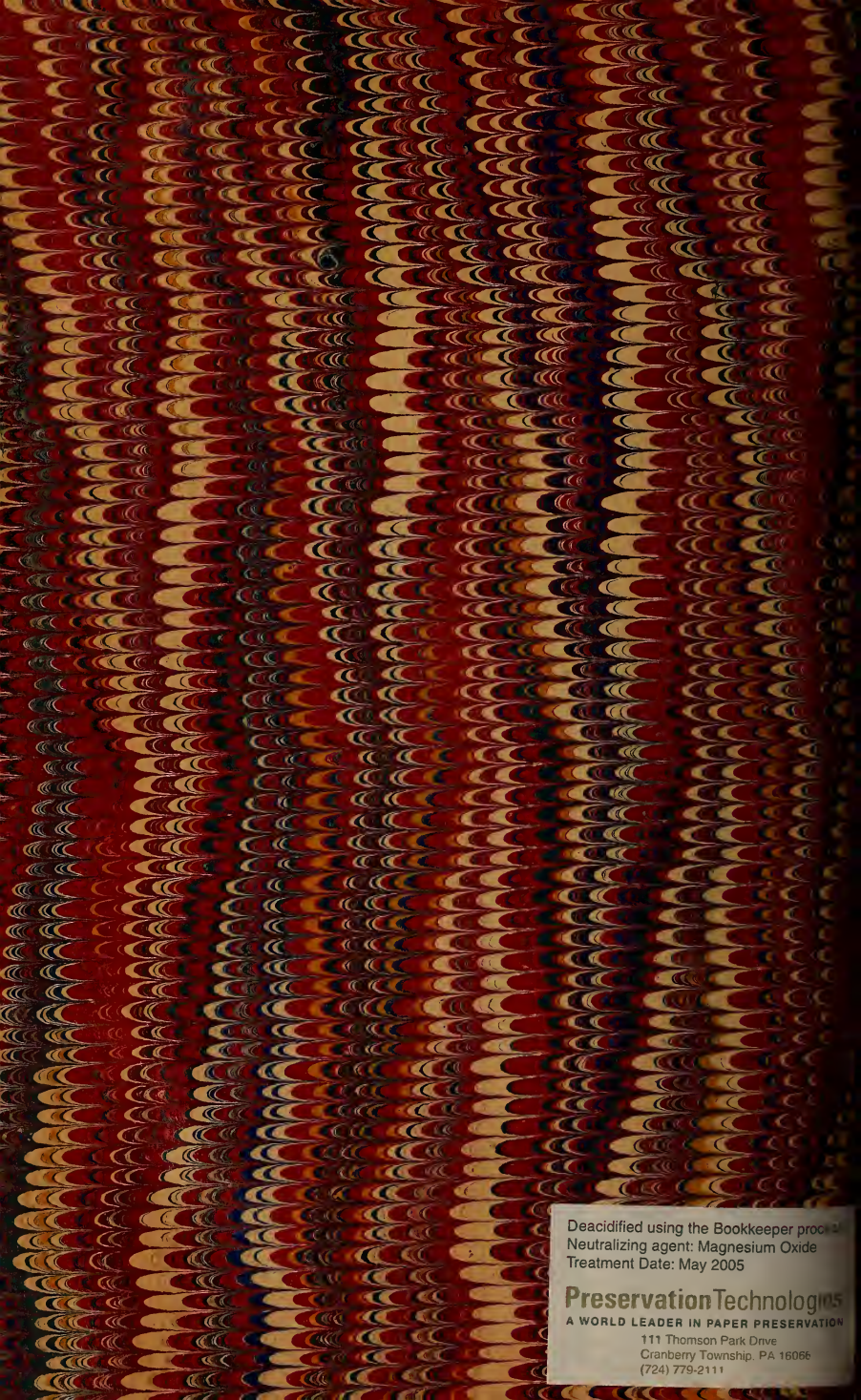
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